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**BRITISH LIGHT INFANTRY  
IN THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY**



*Henry Bouquet*

COLONEL HENRY BOUQUET.

*Frontispiece.*

# British Light Infantry in the Eighteenth Century

(An Introduction to "Sir John Moore's System of Training")

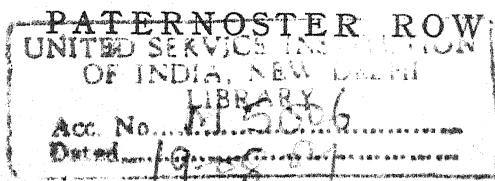
By Colonel J. F. C. FULLER, D.S.O.

(Late 43rd and 52nd Light Infantry) :: ::

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WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO.





## PREFACE

THIS brief account of the growth and vicissitudes of British Light Infantry during the eighteenth century constitutes an introduction to "Sir John Moore's System of Training," which I have dealt with in a separate volume, and without such an introduction a correct appreciation of this great reformer's position in history is difficult to grasp.

At the opening of the eighteenth century, no true light infantry existed in the British Army, and their utility only became apparent during the Seven Years' War. From this war onwards and until the day when Sir John Moore formed his famous camp at Shorncliffe, a determined struggle took place between a few clear-sighted men and the adherents of the traditional school with Frederick as its master. Without this struggle, the efforts of Sir John Moore would have been without avail, for it was this small band of big-hearted pioneers which prepared men's minds for the changes he effected.

Though all honour is due to Sir John Moore as the architect of the "new discipline," we should not forget that honour is also due to such men as Bouquet, Howe, Money, and von Ewald, for it was they who fought and broke the back of antiquated tradition. I mention this here, not only to honour them, but because to-day we are once again faced by

a change in tactics and discipline, and before the John Moore of this present age can seize the reins, the effort of every pioneer in the "new idea" is needed to prepare the way for his advent. I hope, therefore, that this little book will fulfil a double purpose: first, that it will show how far Sir John Moore was indebted to the efforts of certain of his predecessors and contemporaries, and, secondly, how necessary it is to-day for all thinking soldiers to be willing to sacrifice place and popularity so that the British soldiers of a generation hence may be as superior to their eventual enemy as Wellington's men were superior to the French between the years 1809 and 1815.

J. F. C. F.

STAFF COLLEGE,  
CAMBERLEY.

*January 1, 1925.*

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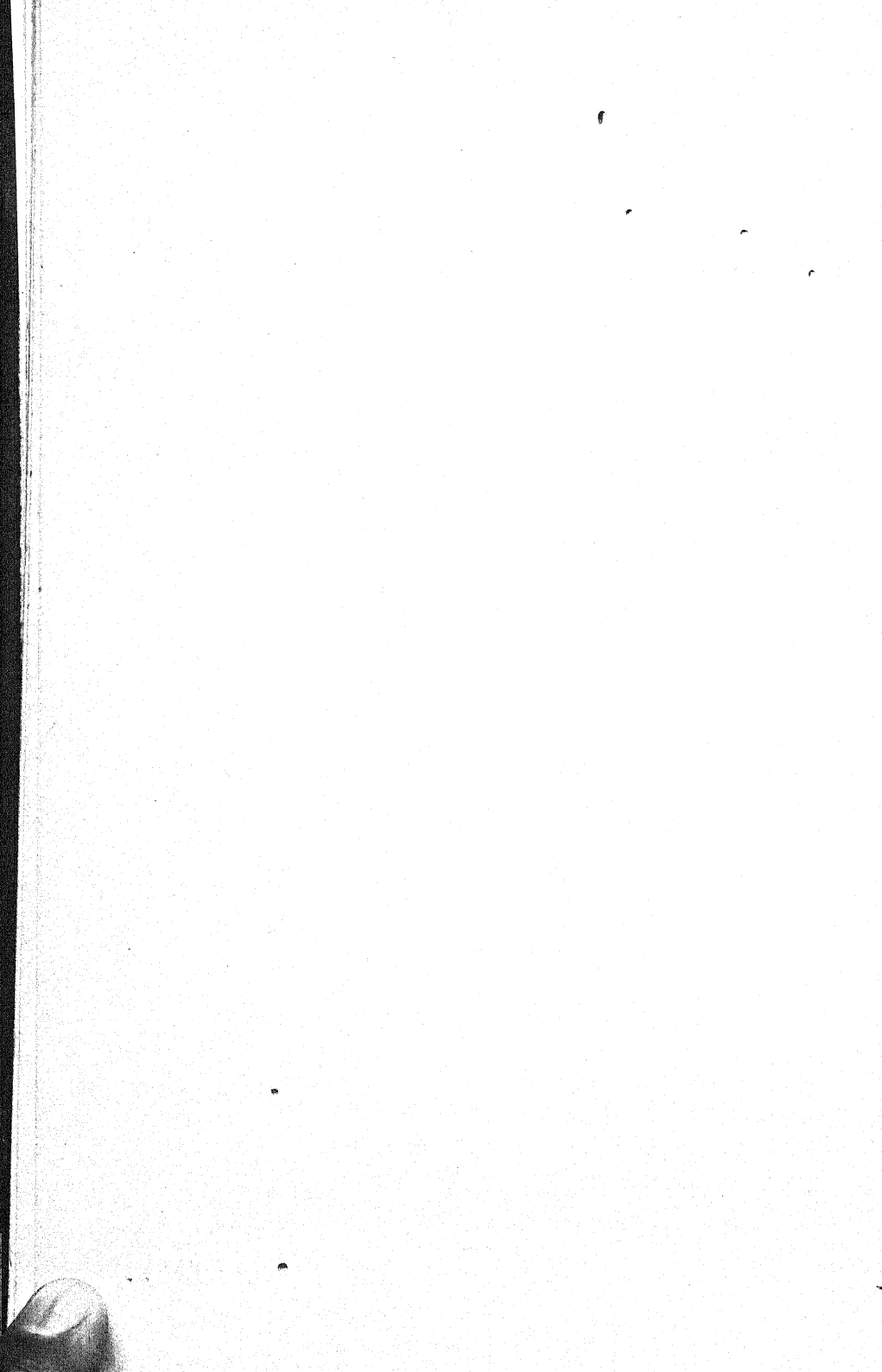
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# BRITISH LIGHT INFANTRY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

## CHAPTER I

### Light Infantry in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

#### GUNPOWDER

THE invention of gunpowder closes the first great epoch in organised warfare.

Gunpowder was introduced into Europe by the Moors, who employed artillery as early as the siege of Saragossa, in 1118. The Spaniards used it at Cordova, in 1280, and against Gibraltar, in 1306. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, hand-guns of curved fire were invented, and a few years later those of direct fire as well. In 1414, muskets were first employed at the siege of Arras.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, much discussion prevailed as to the respective merits of the bow and the archboute, or arquebus—a tube of iron, fixed in a small log, which was fired by applying a match to the vent. The weapon was held against the breast, the musketeer receiving the full force of the recoil. One author writes: "Their advantage is, they pierce all defence of armour and lighting upon a place of the body, the wound whereof endangereth

life, they bring with them certain death." Yet death was often slow in coming, for eighteen different motions were required in loading alone ; and with some of these early firearms ninety-nine movements had to be gone through before making moderately certain of the weapon going off. Further, this writer adds : " Were a hundred musketeers and a hundred bowemen, eche digested into ten files, eche file containing ten men, the bowemen shall be able to shoote at once a hundred arrows for their ten bullets."

This slowness of fire was undoubtedly the main disadvantage of the early musket.

During the fifteenth century, great progress was made in artillery, and, by the middle of it, cannon were in general use. At first they were much laughed at, and according to one authority they were " sometimes useful in frightening horses." Very often they blew up ; besides, the crude powder used gave off such an abominable stink, that escorts had to be provided, not to protect the gunners, but to keep them from deserting their pieces. At the siege of Constantinople, 1453, Muhamed II. made extensive use of ordnance. One of his guns was of enormous size ; it required fifty oxen to drag it, two hundred men, one hundred on each side of it, to keep it from toppling over, and two hundred and fifty in front to clear the way for its advance. This piece took two hours to load, and at the eighth round it blew up !

## ZISCA AND THE WAGENBURG

At about this time, the first half of the fifteenth century, Zisca, the famous leader of the Hussites, was beginning to teach the German nobles and pikemen that their day of reckoning was at hand. His system of war gave a fresh impulse to the employment of infantry in place of cavalry.

For many years the Russians and Ukraines had surrounded their encampments with portable barricades of stakes; further, these wandering Tartars had employed a system of defence, common to most nomadic tribes, namely, that of laagering their waggons, just as the Boers of South Africa did in their early treks. At Poitiers, the Black Prince drew up his waggons in open laager behind his knights and archers. This was usually done in the Middle Ages. The Belgian cities in their wars had adopted the circular laager as a moveable fortress, placing infantry and artillery within it. Zisca, who had been employed by the Belgium cities, now adopted this rampart of waggons as the pivot of his tactics. Under him, this fortified laager became known as the Wagenburg. In this moving fortress he placed his infantry, cavalry and guns. He would then let the enemy's cavalry and pikemen exhaust themselves against the ring of waggons, from which archers, crossbowmen and hand-gunners kept up a continuous shower of missiles. Once demoralisation had seized upon his enemy's ranks, Zisca would

issue out with his cavalry and charge the retreating foe.<sup>1</sup>

Zisca organised a special corps of waggoners, on whose efficiency everything depended; they were drilled, and taught to manœuvre their vehicles with accuracy and promptness.

"At the word of command, we are told, they would form a circle, a square or a triangle, and then rapidly disengage their teams, thus leaving the waggons in proper position, and only needing to be chained together. This done, they took up their position in the centre of the enclosure. . . . The organisation of the whole army was grounded on the waggon as a unit: to each was told off, besides the driver, a band of about twenty men, of whom part were pikemen and flailmen, while the remainder were armed with missile weapons.<sup>2</sup> The former ranged themselves behind the chains which joined waggon to waggon, the latter stood in the vehicles and fired down on the enemy. From the first, Zisca set himself to introduce firearms among the Bohemians; at length nearly a third of them were armed with 'hand-guns,' while a strong train of artillery accompanied every force."<sup>3</sup>

The chief points of interest in this method of warfare are: First, the increase in missile-throwing

<sup>1</sup> "The Influence of Firearms upon Tactics," pp. 3 and 4.

<sup>2</sup> After the Burgher wars, 1388, each German Knight attached to his person as body-guard one pikeman and one archer.

<sup>3</sup> "The Art of War in the Middle Ages," p. 126. Oman.

weapons to demoralise an enemy assault from a defensive position. Secondly, an increase of infantry to use these weapons in order to attack these laagers, cavalry being quite useless.

The warfare of the moving-fortress was not destined, however, to endure for long, for the extraordinary progress made in the manufacture of artillery, during the second and third quarters of the fifteenth century, soon rendered such victories as Deutschbrod, 1422, Aussig, 1426, and Taus, 1431, impossible. The Wagenburg was abandoned, and a return was made to cavalry methods of warfare; these in their turn were soon to be replaced by a powerful and well-armed infantry.

#### THE FIRE-ARMED SKIRMISHER

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, a banneret of Landsknechts consisted of four hundred men, fifty of whom were arquebusiers. Ten such bannerets formed the tactical unit of the day, and the five hundred arquebusiers, or "shots," belonging to it, were employed as flankers, or skirmishers, to hold back the enemy whilst the phalanx was closing its ranks preparatory to the charge. When attacked by cavalry these flanking troops sought refuge within the ranks of the pikemen, the phalanx formation in which these heavy infantrymen marched being maintained throughout the sixteenth century.

At the battle of Pavia, in 1525, we find fifteen hundred Basque arquebusiers<sup>1</sup> thrown out by the

<sup>1</sup> The arquebus was introduced to the English Army in 1521.



Imperialists in front of the French gendarmerie in the form of a regular light infantry skirmishing line ; and though, prior to this battle, the Swiss had, for a similar purpose, made use of crossbowmen and hand-gunners, this, I believe, is the first instance of a skirmishing line of trained light infantry armed with the arquebus.

Brantôme describes their training as follows :

“ I here set forth the action of the Marquis de Pescaire at the battle of Pavia, which I once read of in his life, in which the author relates how (though I give this in French I will translate it word for word from the Spanish, so that it may the more readily be believed) the said marquis won this battle by means of his Spanish arquebusiers, contrary to all rules of war or dispositions of battle, by a veritable confusion and through a great want of order. It must be realised that 1,500 of the most skilful, practised and artful arquebusiers, and above all the most fleet and nimble, were dispersed by the order of the Marquis de Pescaire. These men (these are the very words) had been instructed in the new precepts of the Marquis, and were practised, by a long training, to extend, without word of command, by squads over their entire camp, to wheel round, to face about from this side to that, now here, now there, with the utmost rapidity. Thus they baffled the fury of the horse, in such a manner, through this novel system of fighting, that these arquebusiers unembarrassed and most wonderfully, though cruelly and villainously,

discounted with much ease the power of the French cavalry, who were utterly ruined; for they, collecting together in a mass, were overthrown by these few excellent and brave arquebusiers. This unmethodical and novel system of fighting is more easily imagined or fancied than described; and whoever pictures it clearly will find it both worthy and useful. But it is necessary that the arquebusiers are well trained, and picked as from a sorting board (as one says) and above all well led." <sup>1</sup>

By the close of the sixteenth century, the three arms were assuming positions of proportionate value, and, as early as 1528, we find a German author writing: "When a lord wishes to expend 300,000 florins on a war, he must give 100,000 for the mounted equipment, another 100,000 for the artillery, and the last 100,000 for the infantry," which shows that the three arms were beginning to be held in equal respect.

#### MAURICE OF NASSAU

The great progress in artillery made during the fifteenth century <sup>2</sup> was replaced in the sixteenth by an equal, if not a greater, progress in the develop-

<sup>1</sup> "Hommes Illustres." Brantôme. Twenty-seventh Discourse.

<sup>2</sup> In France under Henry IV., there existed 400 "bouches à feu d'artillerie de terre;" at the death of Louis XIV., 7,192; under Louis XV., 8,683; under Louis XVI., 10,007; and, in 1813, 27,976. "Des changements survenus dans l'art de la guerre depuis 1700 jusqu'en 1815." Par le Marquis de Chambray 1830.

ment of the musket ; and so rapid was its improvement that, towards the close of this century, we find in the companies of Maurice of Nassau, an equal number of pikemen and musketeers, and this, notwithstanding the fact that the rate of fire was still very slow. Sir John Smythe in his "Certain Discourses Concerning the Formes and Effects of Divers Sorts of Weapons, etc.," published in 1590, tells us that not only were volleys further than forty paces useless, but that the rapidity of the bow was still four times as great as that of the firearms of his day.

In Maurice's army it was still the custom to distribute the musketeers on the flanks of the pikemen, but, by degrees, a new formation was adopted, for, as the musketeers became more numerous, they were organised in separate bodies of skirmishers and were placed at the four corners of the square of pikes.

As the efficiency of the musketeers increased, the clumsy solid square of pikemen was replaced by a hollow one ; and, to render the whole flexible, its sides were formed into separate units, the space inside being reserved for the musketeers as a refuge from cavalry. Maurice next opened out the hollow square, placing his battalions in "echequier," and divided his force, as years earlier the Swiss had done, into three "battles"—an advanced guard, a main body and a rear guard. It is interesting to note that this three "battle" formation, from the days of the Roman legion, with its hastati, principes and triarii, to that of the modern battalion, with its firing line, supports and reserves, has maintained its superiority

over all other attack formations. Maurice further introduced the company system, dividing each company into three sections, the central one of pikemen, or heavy infantry, the outer two of musketeers, or light, the musketeers being placed on the flanks to protect the pikemen from surprise. He reduced the deep formations from twenty-five ranks to ten, which, in his opinion, was the least number which would allow of continuous fire.

Having reorganised his infantry, he turned his attention to his guns, and reduced the numerous calibres of the field-guns then used to 24-, 12- and 6-pounders. He substituted cartridges with iron balls for the hail shot which had hitherto been used, and he attached to his battalions a certain number of light guns, just as machine-guns are allotted to-day, holding back his heavy guns to open and cover the attack. We find here the beginnings of artillery taking the place of infantry as the demoralising agent of the battlefield. In later centuries, the same attempt to replace skirmishers by guns was made by Frederick the Great, and later by Napoleon, and in each case it ultimately failed.

To make the successive employment of troops feasible, we have seen that Maurice abandoned the hollow square for the "echequier" formation, each side of the square forming a separate unit, or, more frequently, the leading face of the square became the advanced guard (Vorhut), the two sides of the main guard, or main body (Gross), and the rear face the rear-guard (Nachhut). He now reduced his regiments

of infantry to one thousand men each, each regiment being composed of two battalions, a battalion consisting of four companies ; each battalion could therefore, if necessary, form a hollow square of its own. By employing these small units in a ten rank formation, pikes in the centre and musketeers on the flanks, a greater mobility was attained. Further, by advancing in successive lines, he caused his opponents to expend the whole of their force against his first and second " battles," whilst he kept his third in reserve for the decisive blow.

What Maurice really did was, by means of small and mobile bodies of men, to combine the shock of the pikemen with the fire-power of his musketeers ; his musketeers were, in fact, true light infantry.

The elemental formation of light troops is the extended line, a line in which every missile weapon can be brought into play ; of heavy troops, the contracted line, or column, not because the column produces shock by impact, but because it supplies the front rank with men to replace casualties, and so maintains its wall-like nature which is so necessary to the assault. It should not be very deep ; Cyrus realised this centuries before this age. When he heard that the Egyptian phalanx was ranged a hundred deep, he said : " As to phalanxes that are too deep to reach the enemy with their weapons, what injury can they possibly do to the enemy, or what service to their fellow combatants ? Those soldiers that are ranged a hundred in depth," added he, " I would rather choose to have ranged ten thousand in

depth, for, by that means, we should engage with a still smaller number, and have the fewer to engage ; but from the number with which I shall deepen our phalanx, I think that I shall render the whole efficient and self-supporting.”<sup>1</sup> Seldom have truer words been spoken.

This fundamental rule of tactics was now being slowly re-learnt, for we find the Swiss phalanx and the heavy massed columns of the French feudal cavalry growing thinner and thinner in order to reduce their vulnerability to fire. The musketeers had, however, still to fight in several ranks, because reduction of vulnerability to fire was of less importance than continuity of fire, and only as the musket improved could the ranks of the musketeers be reduced.

Early in the sixteenth century, the value of the line to attain fire superiority and to reduce casualties was recognised, and attempts were made to develop fire and to support it by keeping a reserve in hand. The musketeer combat allowed of these tactics, the pikemen being kept well back as long as the fire-fight endured. From a contemporary manuscript we read : “ ‘The one body must advance immediately in succession to the other’ (Battle of Cerisola, 1544). The plan did not work well as the infantry pikemen were too slow, so a considerable body of cavalry was selected for this purpose.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “The Cyropædia.” Xenophon, vi. 3. 22.

<sup>2</sup> The Influence of Firearms upon Tactics,” p. 19.

This cavalry was commanded by a Lieutenant-Colonel, whose duty it was to attack at the last moment, and at the spot where he saw the greatest demoralisation was taking place. This is an interesting fact, for in these various formations we see the pikemen steadily supplanted by musketeers and cavalry. The same forces are at work which produced the Byzantine Cataphracts and archers of a thousand years before. The musketeers who, in their employment at Pavia, were solely light infantry, are, under Maurice, and we shall see even more so under Gustavus Adolphus, steadily ousting the heavy infantry. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we shall see how these musketeers themselves become heavy infantry, and how, in order to destroy them and protect them, a new light infantry had to be created.

#### GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS

Even a greater military reformer than Maurice of Nassau was his contemporary, Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden. Like Maurice, he improved the firearms of his day; he introduced cartridges, lightened the musket, and dispensed with the rest. He replaced the matchlock by the wheel-lock; improved the soldiers' equipment; rendered field-guns more mobile, and, like Maurice, attached these to his infantry battalions and provided them with case-shot.

His improvements immediately suggest his tac-

tics, namely: increased mobility and fire-power, the two essentials of the light infantry fight.

Like Maurice, Gustavus abandoned the hollow square, and made use of the three line formation. Later on he secured the line by flanking it with cavalry, just as Edward the Black Prince had flanked his archers with mounted and dismounted men-at-arms. But so strongly was the musket asserting its sway, that the nobility were abandoning the lance for the wheel-lock. Heavy armour was being discarded, partially on account of its uselessness, partially because, at this date, a mixing of the European breeds of horses had diminished their carrying power, and mainly because of its inconvenience to movement. Mounted infantry now takes the place of cavalry, the sword and lance are discarded, and the dragoon appears armed with the pistol.<sup>1</sup>

With the abandonment of the *arme blanche*, cavalry lost their mobility, and had actually to be protected by an escort of foot musketeers; for though the individual lancer was inferior to the individual dragoon, the dragoon's pistol was not a match for the infantryman's musket. A mounted man equipped with a firearm is nearly always inferior to an infantryman, and on foot he is little better off, since he has a horse to attend to and to remind him of retirement; for, whilst an infantry-

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<sup>1</sup> The origin of the dragoons is attributed to Marshal de Brissac, who mounted some of his arquebusiers and called them dragoons from the weapon, the dragon, with which they were armed.



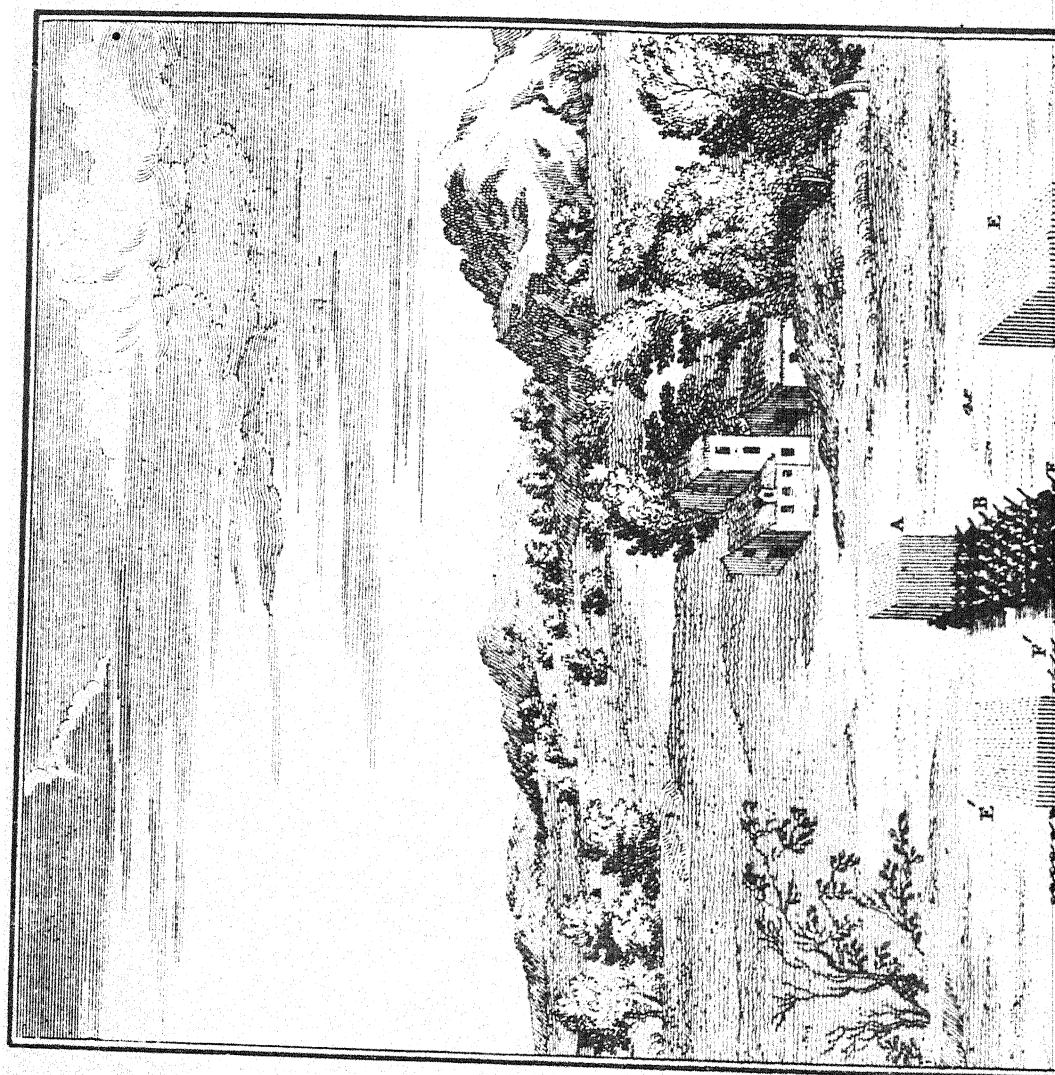
man's line of retreat may be in any direction, that of a cavalryman depends on the position of his horse. Gustavus Adolphus fully realised that a cavalryman without the *arme blanche* is reduced to the position of a scout, consequently, he retained the sword and ordered his cavalry to advance in squadrons between the infantry lines. The foot musketeers opened the battle, and under their fire the dragoons galloped forward, fired their pistols and then, drawing their swords, charged home.

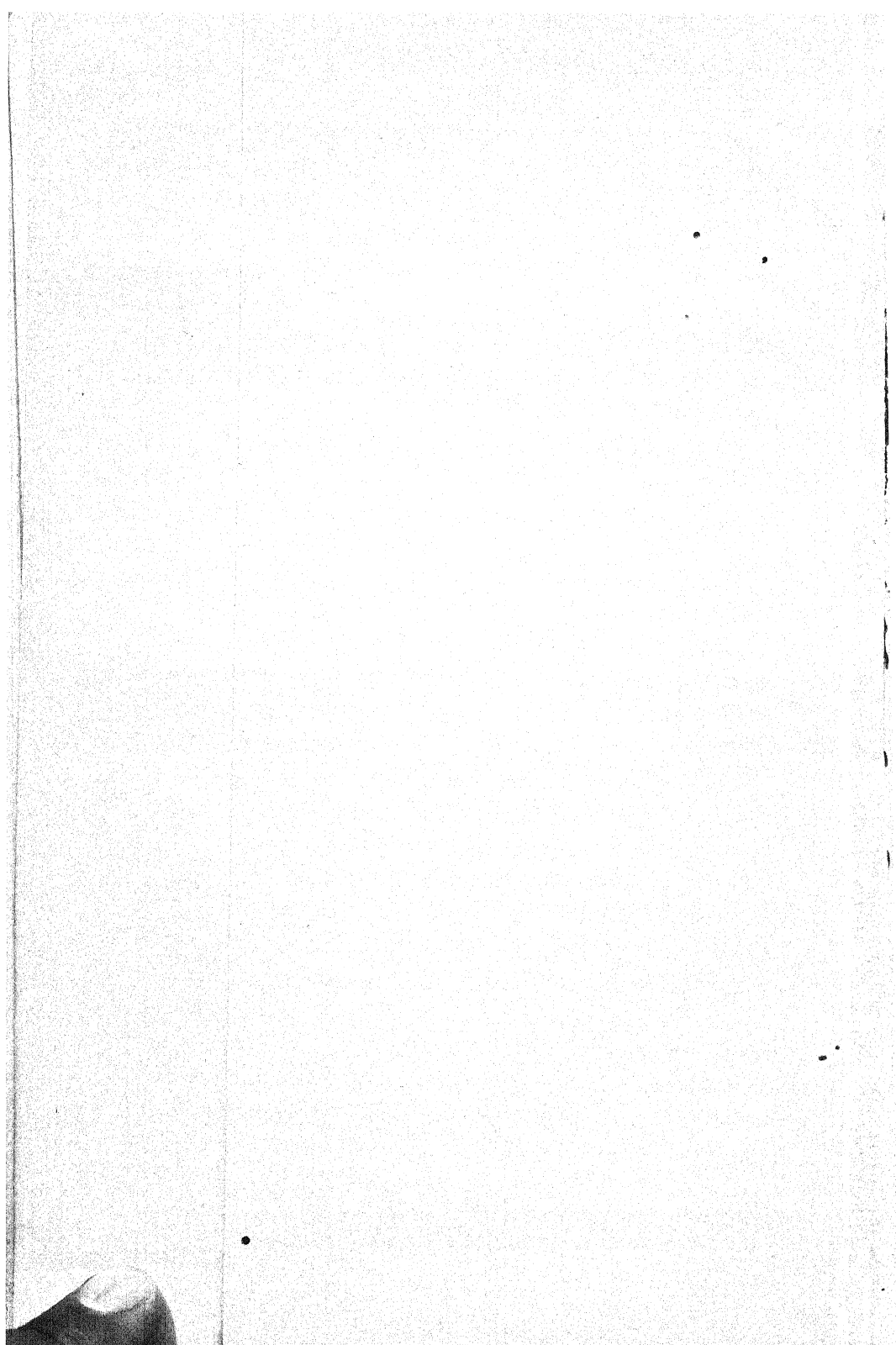
Gustavus Adolphus, by introducing the wheel-lock and cartridge, was able to reduce his musketeers from ten ranks to six, but, in action, these six were frequently reduced to three; the result of this was an enormous development of fire-power. The Imperialists, still adhering to the heavy column formation, "were compelled to guard against being outflanked by the formation of their opponents, to place all their troops in one line, while the Swedes were enabled to form their troops in several lines. Consequently, when the line of the Imperialists was forced at any part they could never bring up fresh troops to support the decisive point."<sup>1</sup>

Gustavus organised his army in brigades, each brigade consisting of two regiments, each of about two thousand men, in two battalions of one thousand each, each in eight companies, each of which had seventy-two musketeers and fifty-three pikemen.

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<sup>1</sup> "A Précis of Modern Tactics," p. 226. Home, 1892.





## THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV

As the musketeers increased and the pikemen diminished, the column was drawn out more and more into a line. This, in its turn, led to a further increase in cavalry to outflank these extended frontages, until outflanking became a recognised manœuvre; with the result that, for the first time, since the days of the legion, did the attack equipose the defence. The shield wall, the archers and their stakes, the phalanxes and the waggon fortresses were strong because they were defensive formations, but the cannon and the musket had now rendered them all alike useless if not impossible. Once the power of the attack became superior to the defence, manœuvring grew to be an art; it took the place of fire and shock. To be able to manœuvre with skill was to be a great general. At the battle of the Dunes, 1650, for the last time for many years, do we find the Spanish, under Condé, employing a light infantry skirmishing line as it had been employed at Pavia one hundred and twenty-five years earlier. At this battle, Condé and Turenne were badly defeated, and we see the skirmishing line no more. Condé, Montecuculi, Mercy, Turenne and Luxemburg, little by little adopted the new system of war, until at Fleurus, 1690, and at Neerwinden, 1693, Marshal Luxemburg proved himself a master of manœuvre.

As manœuvring took the place of fighting, fortresses and fortified towns, as pivots of manœuvre, rose into importance, and still further changed the

aspect of warfare. Fortresses meant sieges, sieges gave rise to a new soldier—the grenadier—also to large convoys, which, though they tempted the attacks of irregular sharpshooters, do not seem to have given rise to a light infantry organisation to protect them.

Marlborough, Eugène, Vendôme, Vauban, Villars, Vilroy and others, though they added considerably to the sciences of fortifications and strategy, added little to the art of tactics ; and though, as we shall see, towards the close of the War of the Spanish Succession, a few ill-trained sharpshooters made their appearance, there was so little idea of what light infantry could do, and had done, that Eugène, in 1702, planned to surprise Vendôme's army, during the Luzara campaign in Italy, whilst it was pitching its tents. And it was only through an accident that a soldier, climbing up a dike close to the camp, discovered the entire Austrian army lying behind it.

Mass-fire of both infantry and artillery now becomes the order of the day, just as the massing of pikes was the rule during the age of the mediæval Swiss ; for this mass-fire was a necessary means of concentrating fire against those parts of the enemy's line it was intended to out-manceuvre. The triple line of collective fire now takes the place of the individual fire of the skirmisher who, as a trained sharpshooter, disappears from the European battle-fields for close on a hundred and fifty years.

## CHAPTER II

## The Invention of the Fusil and the Bayonet

## THE FUSIL

THE change in tactics, due to the introduction of the wheel-lock and cartridge, received yet a fresh impulse towards the middle of the seventeenth century, when the fusil, or flintlock, made its appearance.

Once introduced, it was speedily adopted. At first it was issued to a few men in each company, or battalion, who became known as fusiliers; but, as its fire was more certain than either the matchlock or wheel-lock, its weight less, and its cost of production not more, it was not long before it was adopted by the line, and by the year 1700 it was in universal use throughout the armies of Europe.

In a book entitled "English Military Discipline, or the Way and Method of Exercising Horse and Foot," published in 1680, we learn that the fusil was then in use in our army, and especially among fusiliers and grenadiers. ". . . Perhaps the fusilier regiments were originally a sort of grenadiers," writes the author; but Grosse states,<sup>1</sup> that the "first

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<sup>1</sup> "Military Antiquities," p. 152. Francis Grosse, 1812.

design of fusilier was to guard the artillery," which conveys, as one would expect, in an age in which light infantry tactics were in disrepute, that fusiliers were not meant to serve as light infantry at all, but simply as marksmen, or picked shots. Cooper, in his "Military Cabinet," informs us that in former times the officers of fusilier regiments did not carry spon-toons, but had fusils like the officers of flank companies throughout the line. According to Grosse: "Father Daniel says the first grenadiers in the French troops were placed in the King's Regiment, in the year 1667," four to each company, and that, in 1670, they were formed into one complete company for each regiment or battalion. In 1684, we meet with grenadier companies in most British regiments; they were probably introduced about 1678.

Grenadiers appear to have been first raised during the Thirty Years' War. Their main weapon was the hand bomb, or grenade, called after "grenada," the pomegranate.

In "An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline," printed, in 1686, by special command for the use of his Majesty's forces, we find that the grenadiers were armed with firelock, swords, daggers, and pouches with grenades, also with hatchets, with which, after having thrown their grenades, they were, on the command of "Fall on!" to rush upon the enemy. "The Exercise of the Foot," 1690, makes no mention of these hatchets which presumably by then had been withdrawn.

## THE BAYONET

During the last quarter of the seventeenth century we see a steady decline in pikemen and a corresponding increase in fusiliers. During the wars of Louis XIV., the number of pikes was reduced to one-third of the battalion, then to a quarter, to a fifth, and, "at last they were only found in a central group in each company, so small as to be called a *picquet*, or 'little body of pikes,' whence the word 'picket,' meaning the support of the outposts, probably because the musketeers furnished the sentries and the pikes the support." <sup>1</sup>

In 1670, the bayonet was adopted by the French infantry. Originally an invention of the Basque smugglers, who were in the habit of fixing the handles of their knives into the muzzles of their guns, it was now destined to complete the revolution in the art of war commenced by the wheel-lock and the fusil, and still further to reduce the declining utility of light infantry by supplying every infantry soldier with a detachable pike. In other words, being armed alike, the infantry soldier could act either as a heavy or a light infantryman, and, as was to be expected, he preferred the former service, for, throughout history, it has always been considered the more honourable of the two.

In 1688, it was introduced into the English Army, and at first with disastrous results ; for, at the battle

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<sup>1</sup> "Organisation," p. 148. Colonel H. Foster.



of Killiecrankie, 1689, on account of the bayonet then used blocking the muzzle of the musket, the English infantry, under Mackay, lost all power of fire once bayonets were fixed ; with the result, that with such clumsy pikes as they now possessed, they were no match for the fierce Highlanders of Dundee, whose methods of fighting, in spite of their want of training, more closely approximated to the requirements of war. For, having once discharged their muskets at close range, these Highlanders, drawing their broadswords, threw themselves upon the disordered English soldiers and utterly routed them.

By 1700, the pike had disappeared to all intents and purposes from organised armies. In England it lingered on for still another century in the form of the junior officer's spontoon.

### EARLY DRILL OF THE MUSKETEERS

It may be of some interest here briefly to set forth the drill of the early British musketeers.

In the time of James I. we find that an English company consisted of one hundred men standing in ten ranks,<sup>1</sup> forming a small solid square of ten men

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<sup>1</sup> During the greater part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, each company of 140 men consisted of 40 men-at-arms, 10 halberdiers, or battle-axemen, 30 pikemen ; these formed the heavy infantry. The light infantry included 20 archers, 20 musketeers, and 20 arquebusiers. A company of 200 men in line stood as follows : 20 arquebusiers, 20 archers, 20 musketeers, 30 pikemen, 10 halberdiers, the ensign, 10 halberdiers, 30 pikemen, 20 musketeers, 20 archers, 20 arquebusiers. " Historical Records of the British Army." Richard Cannon.

each way. This square was divided into four smaller squares known as "escadrons." Both ranks and files had three different distances: "open-order," "order," and "close-order"; the first represented an interval and distance of six feet, the second of three, and the third of a shoulder to shoulder formation. For files, "open-order" was obtained by opening out and extending the arms to the full extent; "order," by placing the arms akimbo, hands resting on the hips. Musketeers were never to be in closer order than the second, namely, "order," and "close-order" was only employed by the pikemen when withstanding a charge. For purposes of training, "open-order" was generally used; and "order," "when embattled before an enemy." Every corps consisted of pikemen and musketeers—the pikemen were drawn up in the centre, the musketeers on the flanks; hence the name of flankers. Only one rank fired at a time.

#### THE DOUBLE-ARMED MAN

It is interesting to note that though the musket had entirely ousted the bow, the question was more than once debated whether the bow should not be re-introduced in place of the musket. William Nead, in 1625, published a book called "The Double-armed Man," in which he suggested, in order to overcome the difficulty of protecting the musketeers by pikemen, to raise a body of infantry armed with both the pike and the bow, in fact, armed similarly

to the "Baliares" of the Carthaginian light infantry under Hannibal. These double-armed men were to discharge their arrows until the enemy had approached to within one hundred and twenty paces of them, and then, fastening their bows to their pikes, to charge home. The bow and the pike could be used in all weathers, and it must be remembered that the arquebus could only be fired when the weather was fine; this was a most serious disadvantage.<sup>1</sup> Nead's idea was a very ingenious one, and it showed a thorough grasp of the principles of fire and shock tactics. When on the defensive, the rear rank fired over the heads of the front ranks, just as the Grecian archers fired over the sixteen ranks of the phalanx. Though Nead's suggestion was never adopted, his idea lingered on in men's minds, and as late as 1798 we find it revived in a book published by Richard Oswald Mason, in which the author advocated arming the British volunteers with pikes and long-bows in place of with muskets.

#### SEVENTEENTH CENTURY DISCIPLINE

The discipline of the English soldier during the seventeenth century was not altogether lacking in moral qualities; it was certainly of a higher order than the discipline which existed a hundred and fifty years later under the misrule of Pitt. From a

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<sup>1</sup> This disadvantage continued up to the time of the invention of the percussion cap which sealed the fate of the cavalry charge.

pamphlet entitled "A worthy speech spoken by his excellence the E. of Essex in the head of his armie before his arrival at Worcester, on Saturday last, being the 24th September, 1642. Published September 29th, 1642," we read the following :

"(1) I shall desire all and every officer to endeavour by love and affable carriage to command his souldiers, since what is done for fear is done unwillingly, and what is unwillingly attempted can never prosper.

"(3) That you beare yourselves like souldiers without doing any spoil to the inhabitants of the country.

"(7) Whosoever shall be knowne to neglect the feeding of his horse with necessary provender, to the end that his horse be disabled or unfit for service, the party for the said default shall suffer a month's imprisonment, and afterwards be cashiered as unworthy the name of a souldier."

These orders, brief though they are, show that soldiers, even as early as the middle of the seventeenth century, were not altogether wanting in humanity ; further they show a high moral grasp on the part of the Earl of Essex.

By the end of the seventeenth century we find, in all European armies, automatic drill not only

becoming very complex but constituting, practically, the sole training of the soldier. This drill was necessary in order to carry out, with precision, volley firing in three ranks.

In the "Exercise of the Foot," published in London in 1690, the soldier's training is divided under four general headings.

- (i.) The Manual Exercise of the musket, which contains 44 different sections.
- (ii.) The exercise of the Grenadier. The first words of command begin thus: "Take heed, Granadeers to Exercise your Firelocks." Section 20 reads: "Draw your Bayonet," and Section 21: "Screw your Bayonet in the Muzzel," which points to the plug-bayonet being still in use in 1690, a year after the disaster of Killiecrankie. In all, for the Grenadiers, there are 59 sections.
- (iii.) The Exercise of the Pike. 36 Sections. This exercise seems to have been very similar to the bayonet exercise as taught in the British Army twenty-five years ago.
- (iv.) The Evolutions. 121 Sections.

We have seen that, as early as the time of Gustavus Adolphus, cavalry were abandoning the *arme blanche* for the pistol, and that dragoons, for all intents and purposes, had taken the place of the light infantry musketeer. In England, we find no exception to this change in cavalry tactics, and, in

the reign of James II., we meet with a fully-equipped horse-grenadier.

“The horse-grenadiers then acted like a company of grenadiers to a battalion, and were armed with muskets and grenades, linked their horses, dismounted, fired, screwed their daggers into the muzzles of their muskets, charged, returned their daggers, fired, and threw their grenades by ranks, the centre and rear ranks advancing in succession through the intervals between their file-leaders; they then grounded their arms, went to the right about, dispersed, and, at the preparative to breaking to arms, drew their swords, and stood by their arms, falling in with a huzza! They then returned their swords, shouldered and slung their muskets, marched to their horses, unlinked and mounted; after which, they fired their pistols and muskets on horseback.”

If these absurd gymnastics, which are reminiscent of the tumblings and dancings of the light troops of Rameses II., be correct, they only show how the art of war had retrograded since the one tactical rule of all warfare, namely, “that the act of demoralisation must prepare the act of decision,” had been abandoned as the corner-stone of battle. This retrogression was complete when the two types of infantry—light and heavy—had merged into one, and when the two forms of action—individual and collective—were thereby restricted from finding expression. In place, we see a mass of moving marionettes, thoughtless and unthinking, turning this way and that, and

delivering, by word of command, volleys of ill-directed lead at a line of similar automata standing at attention fifty paces in front of them, to receive such stray shots as do not pass over their heads.

## CHAPTER III

## The Re-introduction of Irregulars

## THE AUTOMATIC FIRING-LINE

As far as infantry tactics are concerned, and in spite of the illustrious names of Marlborough, Eugène and Frederick, the first half of the eighteenth century constitutes a period of stagnation, this being partially due to the fact that, with the exception of the iron ramrod of Mollwitz, no great improvement in weapons was made. The brilliant exception to this lack of interest in the art of war was the famous Maréchal de Saxe.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, a complete *volte face* had been accomplished in tactics. The musketeer, who had taken the place of the archer, the arbalester, and the light Spanish swordsman, had, through their very missile power, so essential to light infantry, and because of the introduction of the bayonet, so essential to heavy, lost all their light infantry qualities. It was on account of, in place of, in spite of, the progress in the manufacture of small arms that the musketeers became the heavy infantry of the line, who, because they maintained the shallow light infantry formation, were, as heavy



infantry, unsuited to carry out effectively shock tactics.

The original twenty-five ranks of the pikemén had been reduced by Maurice to ten, by Gustavus to six, and now, under Marlborough, Villars and Vileroy, to four and three. The three distinct sections of the company had vanished, namely, the central core of pikemen and the wings of musketeers. The triple line formation evolved by Maurice and Gustavus from the hollow square had also disappeared; it had closed its intervals and become one extended and jointless bar of men, from which such ponderous discharges of musketry were delivered, that cavalry could no longer, armed as they were with pistol and musketoon, attack with any hope of success. Cavalry, consequently, was more and more dispensed with, and for fifty years remained in the background, infantry taking its place, and artillery became an auxiliary to aid the infantry advance. The *rigid* line formation does not, however, favour the shock; it lacks animation and mobility, nor does it favour fire, as it hinders independent action and aim and, consequently, reduces the destructive power of firearms.

“The battles of this time (War of the Spanish Succession) were decided by nothing more than what the Swiss, the Landsknechts and the German cavalry had been celebrated for in the sixteenth century, viz., order and cohesion, which were now exemplified by the regular and intensive fire of a battalion. As the Germans and English excel all other nations in this

peculiarity, these, and especially the French, suffered reverse after reverse." <sup>1</sup>

A few light infantry would have turned the French reverses into brilliant victories; and though this fact seems to be self-evident, it took exactly another century for Europe to grasp the lessons of Pydna, of Agincourt, and of Barletta; namely, that any body of heavy infantry maintained in mass formation can be destroyed, at leisure, by a much smaller force of well armed light infantry trained to act independently.

In spite of the fact that volleys of lead, at thirty to fifty paces distance, won Blenheim, Oudenarde, Minden and Dettingen, this system was radically faulty, in fact, it was a monstrosity in fire-tactics. That it lasted as long as it did only shows how conservative are systems which depend for their introduction and good name, not on the skill of their introducer, but on the mistakes and ignorance of his victims.

In 1804, one hundred years after Blenheim, a century famous for its wars throughout the world against heavy and light infantry alike, wars which were scattered over four continents, it was left to the illustrious Robert Jackson, an army surgeon, to write these words :

"The firelock is an instrument of missile force. It is obvious that the force which is missile ought to be directed with aim, otherwise it will strike only by accident. It is evident that a person cannot take

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<sup>1</sup> "The Influence of Firearms upon Tactics," p. 26.

aim with any correctness unless he be free, independent and clear of all surrounding incumbrances ; and, for this reason, there can be little dependence on the effect of fire that is given by platoons or volleys, and by word of command. Such explosions may intimidate by their noise ; it is mere chance if they destroy by their impression. If there be a general maxim in war, it consists in opening the ranks for the use of missile force, and in closing them for the charge with the bayonet. If the destruction of the enemy be the object of a battle, the arrangements of modern tactic and the drillings of the soldier counteract the purpose. History furnishes proof that the battle is rarely gained by the scientific use of the musket ; noise intimidates ; platoon-firing strikes only at random ; the charge with the bayonet decides the question.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet, though Robert Jackson wrote these words at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was only towards the end of this same century that their intent was appreciated and acted upon.

The anomalous nature of warfare in this age was pronounced ; the musket, *par excellence*, the missile-throwing weapon of the day, was no longer used to prepare the assault by disorganising the enemy's ranks, for its fire carried out an assault of its own, the shock now taking place, not at close quarters, but

<sup>1</sup> “ A View of the Formation Discipline and Economy of Armies,” p. 258. Robert Jackson, M.D. Third Edition, 1845. It took exactly another hundred years after Jackson wrote this to prove to the Russians in Manchuria that the volley is radically a faulty form of fire tactics.

when still at a distance. Battles were now decided, not by demoralisation followed by shock, not even by *manceuvre*, for, until the advent of Frederick the Great, *manceuvring* of the great unjointed lines was next to impossible ; not even by the bayonet charge, the true shock, but by halting at fifty paces distance from a line of men as immobile as a stop butt, and blowing this line off the face of the earth by ponderous discharges of lead. It was, in fact, the elephantiasis of fire-tactics. If the enemy retired, his assailant had to wait until he had halted ; if he refused to halt, battles became impossible.

Only two men stand out during this period as men who still understand the essential value of missile and shock, namely, Folard and the Maréchal de Saxe. Folard worked out a new tactics in which the line and column were linked together by a chain of skirmishers. Maréchal de Saxe improved on this system and wished to put his ideas into practice, but the means at his disposal were insufficient, so he fell back, as is usual with the weaker party, on the defensive. But, in place of crouching behind stakes and waggons, as the English archers and the Hussites had done, he employed defensive posts, an increased artillery and a successive employment of his forces, with the result that the Dutch and the English sustained one defeat after another—Fontenoy, 1745, Laufeldt, 1747, and Rocoux, 1747 ; the Netherlands were invaded and Savoy and Piedmont conquered.

## THE AUSTRIAN IRREGULARS

Signs, though absent at the time, are not absent now (which is often the case when we read history in place of making it) of the beginnings of a new era of war which was destined to take two hundred years to mature. Through force of circumstance and of necessity that ancient system of tactics which has for its aim the demoralisation of the enemy before the act of decision can be carried out was re-introduced. The battles of the Trebia, Agincourt and Pavia should have taught the leaders of eighteenth-century armies this one great lesson, but history is seldom read by those who have the making of it, and only too often is the past buried for the sake of a bubble reputation. They did not, and it was not until bands of howling savages, Tolpatches and Croats, had brought rape and murder into the Palatinate, and Iroquois and Mohawk had scalped the killed and wounded red coats of Braddock on the bank of the Monongahela, that generals began to realise, and then how feebly, that drill and method alone are not sufficient to teach a soldier to slay even a simple savage.

For many centuries, raids, massacres, persecutions and assassinations had been of daily occurrence in south-eastern Europe, where Turk meets Slav, Serbian and Croat. As these interminable skirmishes, at times, led to prolonged wars of rapine, of ravage, and of revenge, rather than of conquest or expulsion, the Austrians would take into their service bands of

irregulars drawn from the local militias, cut-throats, banditti and such like, who were called by many names,\* such as Pandours, Croats, Tolpatches and Crabbates,<sup>1</sup> according to the district in which they were recruited. They were a wild, thieving, plundering, murdering lot of scoundrels, of little use for fighting, but invaluable for purposes of reconnaissance, for outposts, screens and ambuscades. "With in a circle of these ruffians the troops of the line marched in dignified security."<sup>2</sup>

Besides these semi-savages, the Austrians frequently employed a corps of riflemen known as the "Tirailleurs of the Tyrol," who were famed for their

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<sup>1</sup> In Charles James's "A New and Enlarged Military Dictionary," 1805, we find the following information :

CROATS. Light irregular troops. "They are ordered upon all desperate services."

ARMS: A long firelock with rifled barrel, a short bayonet, a brace of pistols. Maria Theresa employed 5,000 of these irregular troops, "the greater part of which had no pay, but lived on plunder, on the acquisition of which they are remarkably dexterous."

PANDOURS, SCLAVARIANS, who inhabit the banks of the Drave. "The Pandours were originally a corps of infantry named Ruitza; and their chief occupation or duty was to clear the highroads of thieves." They first made their appearance in Germany under Baron Trenck, 1741. See also "Encyclopédie Méthodique (Art Militaire), Paris, 1784," Vol. III., p. 296.

TOLPATCHES or TALPATCHES. A nickname of the Hungarian foot soldier, usually used as an insult.

CRABBATES. I have not yet discovered what type of rascals these were. (J. F. C. F.).

<sup>2</sup> "The British Army," p. 80. 1783-1802. The Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

deadly fire. With such light troops as these they covered and protected the ponderous movements of their heavy masses of infantry.<sup>1</sup>

According to Guibert,<sup>2</sup> in 1740, when the War of the Austrian Succession was imminent, the Queen of Hungary raised bands of Croats. These, as usual, consisted of desperadoes and banditti whose duty it was to bivouack round the Austrian encampments. Under Nadasti and Loudon and the brutal partisan leaders Meutzel and Trenck, they gained a great and also an infamous reputation. At this time also, the Austrians raised several corps of light cavalry—Hussars—from their Hungarian Militia.

Of the four leaders mentioned above, Loudon was undoubtedly the most able. He, by accident, met in Vienna, in 1744, Francis Baron Trenck, then commanding the Sclavonian Free Corps known as the Pandours. Trenck, taking a fancy to Loudon, gave him one of his companies. Trenck himself was a born plunderer—hard, cold, unfeeling, totally without mercy and preferring pillage to war.<sup>3</sup> He eventually fell into disgrace; but of Loudon we shall hear more when we deal with the light infantry of the Seven Years' War.

Shortly after the declaration of the War of the Spanish Succession, Marshal Saxe, who was not only the greatest general of his time, but a man of genius,

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<sup>1</sup> "History and Campaigns of the Rifle Brigade," p. 4. Colonel W. Verner.

<sup>2</sup> "A General Essay on Tactics." M. Guibert. London, 1781.

<sup>3</sup> "Loudon," p. 27. Colonel G. B. Malleson.



at once recognised how useful the Pandours and Croats were to the Austrian Forces ; not only did they protect them from surprise, but, by laying waste the country on all sides, forced their enemies to scatter in order to live, or to occupy their time in building field depots in place of fighting.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIGHT INFANTRY UNDER MARSHAL DE SAXE

Though the Austrians frequently used the Pandours as sharpshooters, they seldom employed them as true light infantry, namely, as the forerunners of the decisive attack. Saxe saw, however, that their marauding capabilities were often as detrimental to the success of the Austrians as they were an assistance ; further he saw, learning by observation of facts based on theories drawn from history by the Chevalier de Folard, that, if these irregular sharpshooters could be trained and disciplined, they might easily be formed into a magnificent light infantry ; that is into troops capable of preparing and covering the attack.

In the days of de Saxe there were practically no light troops in the French Army. Under Louis XIV., Duhesme tells us, there were no light infantry at all, and that protective duties were carried out by the cavalry. That, in the reign of Louis XV., a few light infantry were raised, but that they took no part in pitched battles. He relates that an old soldier of the Seven Years' War once told him that light



infantry was not used by the French during that war.<sup>1</sup> This, as a general assertion, is probably correct.

Guibert tells us in his "Tactics" that :<sup>2</sup>

"Nations for many ages past have made war without this kind of arm, which we call light troops.

"At the arrival of some officers from the wars of Hungary, who had seen the irregular troops of the Turks and the Hungarians, and who had brought with them a few Hussars of these last people, gave the thought to Marshal Luxembourg of raising, in 1692, the first regiment of French hussars, called Mortagin . . . this led to the raising of others. . . . These hussars and dragoons were followed by independent troops. . . . These independent troops were raised by Swiss officers ; . . . history records that these troops . . . signalised themselves by many daring acts of valour." <sup>3</sup>

Marshal de Saxe now proposed the following system :

To form, as the tactical unit, a division of four regiments, each regiment consisting of four companies of one hundred and eighty-four men each, together with a half company of light infantry and

<sup>1</sup> "Essai Historique sur L'infanterie Légère," p. 121. Par le Comte Duhesme, 1864.

<sup>2</sup> "A General Essay on Tactics." M. Guibert. London, 1751.

<sup>3</sup> In 1702, there were in the French Army 4 or 5 "Compagnies Franches," each of 400 to 500 men. "En 1736 il y eut un Réglement qui fixa à trente hommes les Compagnies Franches ; elles étoient pour lors aux ordres de M. le Maréchal Duc de Bellisle." These companies appear to have been ephemeral. "Traité de la Petite Guerre pour les Compagnies Franches." Par M. de la Croix. Paris, 1752.

another of light cavalry. These regimental half companies were each to consist of seventy men. During the advance, the light infantry were to be thrown out in front as a skirmishing line. When the regiment arrived within assaulting distance, preparatory to the charge, the companies formed company columns at half deploying intervals, through which the light infantry in front could retire. In rear of the regiment the half company of light cavalry was formed into two troops ready to charge through the intervals with the reformed light infantry if the charge of the infantry of the line was successful, or to cover their retirement if it failed.

During the attack, according to Marshal de Saxe, the light infantry, as skirmishers, were to push forward a hundred to two hundred paces in front of the advancing columns, and to open fire when three hundred yards from the enemy, continuing to fire, without word of command, until they had reached a point some fifty yards from the enemy's position. From this distance they were not, suddenly and on their own initiative, to fall back, but to wait for signals from the columns behind them ; these signals being given when the columns were ready to charge home. Once given, the skirmishers were not to run until they had reached the intervals through which they retired and reformed. Meanwhile, the company columns moved up. The intervals between the companies were only ten yards in width, and though they provided enough room for the skirmishers to retire by, they did not offer sufficient for the enemy to

surround the companies and defeat them in detail. Besides, as the charging companies met the enemy's line, the deploying intervals were rapidly filled by fighting men. If the enemy managed, however, to insert himself between the companies, the light infantry were then to advance and charge him in flank.

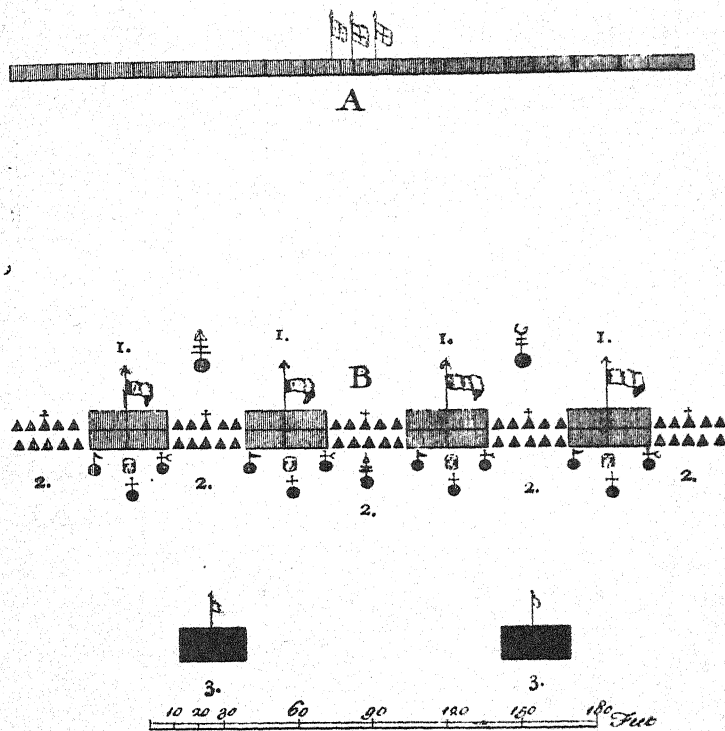
De Saxe's system was based on the tactical rule that shock must be preceded by fire. He tells us: "To cross three hundred yards will take six to seven minutes. Light infantry should be able to fire six shots a minute, but under the stress of battle four should only be allowed for. Each man will, consequently, fire thirty shots during the advance, and as there are seventy men, two thousand shots will altogether be fired. If the men who fire are men who pass their lives in firing at targets, who are not in close order, and who fire freely and independently . . . I hold that one shot fired by a light infantryman thus exercised is worth at least ten fired by another. . . ." "Un fusil à secret," writes de Saxe, "carries four hundred yards point blanc (*de but en blanc*) and if you raise it twenty to twenty-five degrees it will carry one thousand yards."<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately de Saxe was not able to put this system to the test; nevertheless, though he was not in a position to make use of a trained light infantry,

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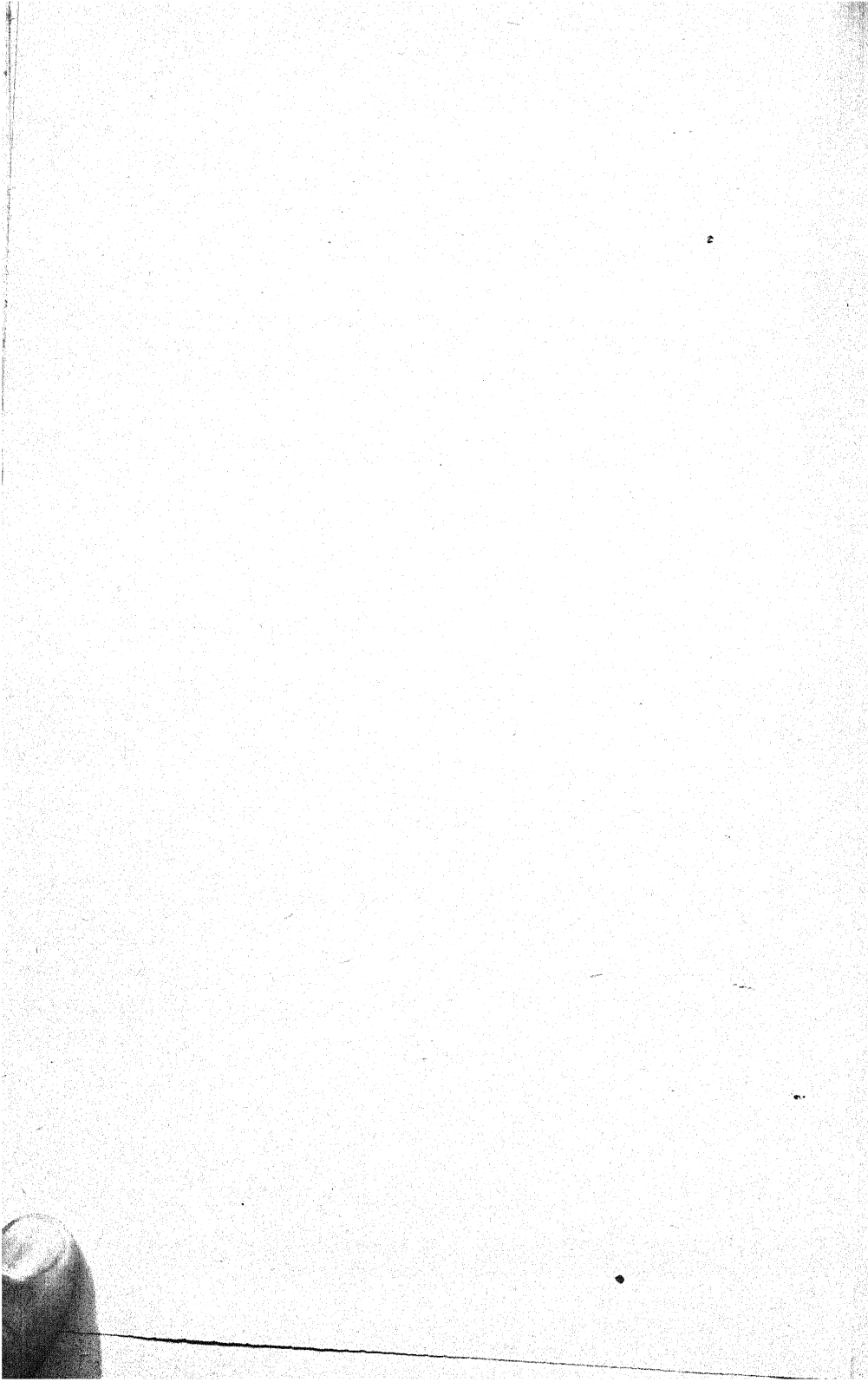
<sup>1</sup> "Essai Historique sur L'Infanterie Légère." Le Comte Duhesme, 1864. "Un fusil à secret" was probably some type of rifle; if so, though it might have fired 1,000 yards, no infantryman could have fired six shots a minute with it.

*Two Battalions in different dispositions for charging.*



### MARSHAL SAXE'S BATTALION FORMATION.

- A. The normal formation of Infantry, four deep.
- B. Marshal Saxe's formation.
  1. Heavy Infantry, eight deep.
  2. Light Infantry.
  3. Cavalry Squadrons.



except his Grassin troops, he made use of an untrained one with signal success. During his campaign in Bohemia, recognising the utility of the Austrian Hussars and Croats, he raised several troops of Hulans. In his army he had the famous legion of Grassin, a combined light infantry and light cavalry corps.<sup>1</sup> Grassin's troops were the first true light infantry of modern times; they behaved splendidly at Fontenoy, 1745, and decided the battle of Mesle. Of Fontenoy, Fortescue writes:<sup>2</sup> "On the 9th of April, 1745, Cumberland arrived at Brissoel, within sight of Saxe's army. The ground immediately in front of the Allies was broken by little copses, woods and enclosures, all of them commanded with mercenary irregular troops—Pandours, Grassins, and the like—which, imitated first from the Austrians,

<sup>1</sup> "Mons. de Grassin's regiment des Arquebusiers," was the first the French had of riflemen; they were raised in 1744, on the advice of Maréchal de Saxe. Extract from a note in the "History of his Campaigns," Vol. II., p. 17.

"This regiment of light troops, composed of 900 men, of which 600 were infantry and 300 cavalry, was raised in less than two months; and it proved itself from its first campaign as useful as the older corps: so true is the saying that men have only to be led well to prove themselves good soldiers. M. de Grassin to accustom his men to fire, sent them out daily to skirmish with the patrols sent out by the garrison of Tournay. This irregular fighting inspired them with such confidence in themselves, that a little later, when they had joined the army of M. de Saxe at Courtrai, two of their piquets being attacked by the free Companies of the Allies defended themselves so staunchly that they forced the enemy to retire in disorder, and harassed them for a considerable time during their retreat."

"A Partial Reorganisation of the British Army," p. 43. General J. Money. 1799.

<sup>2</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. II., p. 109. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

had by this time become a necessary part of the French as of every army."

At Lauffeld, 1747, Saxe masked his movements by sending forward a cloud of irregular troops.

Besides Grassin's legion, Saxe employed other light troops, such as those of Morlière, Cantabres, Ghent, Guesreich and Beausobre, as well as Fischer's free corps,<sup>1</sup> but the other French armies of the day do not seem to have used them so extensively. Nevertheless, we find in Italy, in 1746, in the combined French and Spanish armies under Conti and Don Philip of Piedmont, two battalions of mountain fusiliers. These Spanish mountain troops were called "los Mignones," better known as Miquelets. They were originally a band of Catalonian bandits led by one Michel. This type of robber often turned mercenary in order to legitimise his robberies.

Also, at about this time, the King of Sardinia owed his deliverance to his corps of irregulars, called Barbets, which were recruited from the Alpine valleys

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<sup>1</sup> According to General J. Money in "A Partial Reorganisation of the British Army," 1799, the French, in 1760, "had only one Corps of Irregulars with their army, commanded by Fischer, and we had only one commanded by Colonel Shitzer. . . ." General Money was a veteran of the Seven Years' War.

Fischer was in early life a domestic servant. In 1742, he organised as a free-band, a few of his comrades to resist the attack of the Pandours at Prague. This corps, in 1743, took service in the French Army as the *Chasseurs de Fischer*. Fischer was killed at Welter by Lieut.-Colonel Harvey of the Inniskillings, "who struck off his head with one blow of his broadsword." "A Record of the Services of the Fifty-first (Second West York), The King's Own Light Infantry Regiment," p. 19. W. Wheeler, 1870.




between Pignerol and Nice.<sup>1</sup> In England we find a similar force being raised in the Scottish Highlands.

### THE BLACK WATCH

Independent companies of Highlanders had been raised by the English as far back as 1710, but, owing to the rebellion of 1715, these were disbanded in 1717. In 1725, to enforce the disarmament of the Highlands, four companies of Highlanders were raised in Scotland and became known as the Black Watch. In 1739, four additional companies were raised, the whole being constituted into the 43rd Regiment of the line, now the 42nd Royal Highlanders.<sup>2</sup> Grosse informs us that the companies raised in 1739 were "for the protection of the country against robbers"<sup>3</sup>; they were, in fact, an irregular police, and are well described in a work published in 1743.<sup>4</sup>

About 1725, independent companies of Highlanders, each three hundred strong, were recruited. ". . . They were principally intended to put a final period to the insurrections of the *Clans*, and to secure

 The Barbets were formed into irregular troops for the defence of the Alpine villages . . . "who scatter themselves and retire from tree to tree, from rock to rock, and destroy a party, who can neither beat them, nor take one of them." See "A Treatise on the Art of War," p. 158, 1803; also "Military Instructions for Officers detached in the Field. Containing a scheme for forming a Corps of a Partisan." Roger Stevenson, 1770.

<sup>2</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. II., p. 49. Fortescue.

<sup>3</sup> "Military Antiquities," p. 156. Francis Grosse. 1812.

<sup>4</sup> "A Short History of the Highland Regiments."



their country from any attempts that might be made by the *Highlanders* in the Jacobite interest, it was thought requisite to preserve their ancient habit, that they might be the more able to pursue any of these offenders into their fastnesses.

“The *Highlander* wears a sort of thin pump or brogue, so light that it does not in the least impede his activity in running ; and from being constantly accustomed to these kind of shoes, they are able to advance or retreat with incredible swiftness, so that if they have the better in any engagement it is scarce possible to escape from them ; and on the other hand, if they are overpower’d they soon recover their hills, where it is impossible to reach them. The reader will easily perceive that this is one of the advantages which the *Croats* and *Pandours* have over the *French* troops, especially in such a country as *Bavaria*, which is everywhere intersected by rivers. They gain from hence an opportunity, first of wearying their enemy ’till they are forced to break, and then they are sure to be knocked on the head, as finding it is impossible to run away from these people. . . .”

Their weapons were a “fuzil, a broadsword, a dirk or dagger, an *Highland* pistol all of steel. . . .” In the use of these arms they were extremely adroit, having learnt how to handle them from their infancy.

#### THE GENERAL ADOPTION OF IRREGULARS

By the time the War of the Austrian Succession

had been concluded by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748, we find that untrained light infantry had, chiefly on account of the Croats and Pandours, forced themselves, willy nilly, into recognition as a necessary adjunct to the line, an arm which could harass, and sometimes even destroy the line, and a shield which could nearly always protect it. Further, though the true value of these irregulars was not appreciated by the generals of the day, except by the brilliant Marshal de Saxe, they were, even in their acts of wanton plunder, sowing the seed of a new tactics, which, though ungrasped by the Great Frederick, by distant onlookers, such as Guibert, Turpin and Mesnil-Durand, was to be criticised, dissected and reshaped, until it was built into the perfected infantry tactics of the early Napoleonic Wars.

As in the fourteenth century, the hillmen of Wales, Scotland and Switzerland gave to Europe a new infantry tactics, reviving the military glory of ancient Greece ; now, in the eighteenth, it was the hillmen of the Tyrol, of the Carpathians, of the Pyrenees, and of Piedmont, of Switzerland, and of Scotland, who revived the splendour of the Roman legion, the model which Napoleon adopted.

This is only as it should be, for in sparse mountainous countries, where agriculture is difficult and unprofitable, man relies as much on the bow and arrow, the musket or rifle for hunting, as on the plough for tilling his fields. A mountainous country always produces good soldiers, fleet of foot and sure

of eye. The first light troops in the British Standing Army were the Royal Highlanders, the second, as we shall shortly see, the Royal Americans, under their famous leader, Colonel Bouquet.

## CHAPTER IV

## The Seven Years' War

## THE MUSKET

BEFORE I examine the next great change in the history of war—the re-introduction of manœuvre by Frederick the Great—it is, I think, necessary to appreciate the true value of the musket of this period, for, without realising its power, it is difficult to understand the reason for the close formations which characterised the armies of this day, and even the armies of as late a period as that of the Russo-Turkish War of 1878.

The extreme range of the musket was about four hundred yards. At one hundred and fifty yards, a marksman would miss a six-foot square target practically every time he fired at it. At seventy-five yards the number of hits seldom totalled fifty per cent. of the rounds expended.<sup>1</sup> The result of this

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice de Saxe's opinion of collective musketry-fire was not high; he wrote in his "Reveries": "The firearm is not so terrible as one thinks; few men are killed in action by fire from the front. I have seen volleys that did not hit four men, and neither I nor anyone else saw an effect sufficient to have prevented us from continuing our advance and revenging ourselves with the bayonets and pursuing fire."

was that the "danger zone" was extremely shallow, and, consequently, could be traversed in quick time—in less than five minutes. Further, loading was by the muzzle, men had to stand up to load, and once the front rank had fired, its fire had to be replaced by the rank standing behind it. All these considerations necessitated very close formations. To load and fire by successive ranks necessitated the employment of compact lines, otherwise a continuous fire could not be maintained. To cover the short "danger zone" and break the enemy's line, demanded a formation which combined speed and strength; this the column provided, an attacking line being useless unless it was overwhelmingly strong or the defending line overwhelmingly stupid. To carry out an assault in column was impossible unless the line was subdivided. At the beginning of Frederick's reign no such divisions existed, for, at the end of the seventeenth century, the divisions introduced by Maurice of Nassau and Gustavus Adolphus were done away with in order to create the bar-line of linear tactics, so famous during the Turenne-Eugène-Marlbrough period. Unity of line meant unity of fire, and, as a concentrated broadside of shot was the aim of the fire tactics of the day, the closer regiments could stand in line, and the more rapidly they could load, the quicker could one ponderous volley follow the other; and when the enemy adopted the same tactics, it stood to reason that the side which hurled the greatest quantity of lead at the other, in the shortest space of time, was the side

which would ultimately prove victorious. This rapidity of fire depended on loading, loading on discipline and drill—mechanical drill, absolutely soulless, and carried out by word of command. Fire depended on drill, movement depended on drill, and ultimately the assault depended on drill; for, when the opposing side was sufficiently shattered, the drums would beat the charge, which was no mountain torrent of steel and muscle as at Killiecrankie, but a movement of perfect ceremony, of beautiful precision, of the most exquisite and wonderful exactitude, for Frederick's grenadiers carried out their charge at the goose-step!

Mechanical movement<sup>1</sup> and implicit obedience were the two conditions aimed at by Frederick, his only mechanical invention being the iron ram-rod which, facilitating the loading of the musket, helped him to win the battle of Mollwitz, in 1741. Not content with velocity of fire, he turned his attention to manœuvring, so that he might mass men against the defenceless flanks of his enemy's long unjointed line. This necessitated further drill, further mechanism.

#### FREDERICK THE GREAT'S FIRE TACTICS

In Frederick's day, a general brought his army from column of route into order of battle, not after

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<sup>1</sup> "The cruelly precise drills, which are described by Frederick's aide-de-camp, Berenhorst, as rendering the Prussian soldiers '*des automates roidis*.'" "Staff College Essays." Lieut. Evelyn Baring. 1870.

gaining information of his enemy's whereabouts, but before gaining it, such was the inverted order of tactics ; and to change this order, once it had been assumed, was both a difficult and a lengthy operation. Frederick saw that, if he could manœuvre sufficiently rapidly to form his order of battle *after* gaining exact information of his enemy's whereabouts, the advantage would *always* be his, and that if tactics remained what they were, he *must* win, in fact he could scarcely fail to do so. He determined, therefore, to divide his army into flexible divisions, and consequently re-introduced, as the tactical unit, the company, so that line formation might with rapidity be closed into column, that is, into a march formation, and column extended into line, that is, into a fighting formation. Further he introduced an elementary tactics explaining how this could be carried out in the shortest possible time.

Though Frederick made little use of light infantry from a protective point of view and none from an aggressive, it cannot, for a moment, be said that he failed to grasp the fundamental tactical principle that demoralisation by fire is the stepping stone to destruction by the bayonet ; for in place of using a light infantry skirmishing line followed by heavy infantry columns, as advocated by Marshal de Saxe, he used heavy infantry (broadside fire) and artillery as the demoralising agents, followed by his superb cavalry as the agent of the shock. His troopers were armed with the sword as well as with the pistol. This fact alone raised his cavalry, under such a leader



as Seydlitz, from the position of an indifferent mounted infantry to that of probably the finest cavalry to be read of since the days of Alexander.<sup>1</sup>

Lieut.-Colonel F. N. Maude, on the rate and volume of the Prussian fire, writes :

“ It will be as well to analyse carefully what charging home against the Prussian infantry in those days meant. It is notorious how perfect the drill of the latter had become, but it is not so well known that the musket of the period carried an 8-bore bullet with a charge of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  oz. of powder, which could be loaded and fired by individuals five times in one minute, and that the companies could fire at the rate of two and a half to three volleys in the same time. As the men stood three deep, and occupied two feet width in the line, that gave nine bullets for each two yards of front per volley, or thirteen bullets per yard per minute, or about the same number of bullets as the best drilled squads of Hythe, one man to the yard, can deliver in volleys at the present day. But an 8-bore spherical bullet will drop even a bison in his tracks, whereas it takes about ten modern bullets, designed on humanitarian principles, to seriously inconvenience a horse ; hence no possible combination of men in line with modern rifles now

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<sup>1</sup> The Prussian regulations of 1727 laid down : “ All squadrons shall advance to the attack with swords at the engage, standards flying, and trumpets sounding, and every commander is held bound, on his honour and reputation, to allow no shooting, but always to ride home with the sword.”



could approach the stopping power of the old weapons then."

This analysis shows, more or less correctly, the great rate of fire and the enormous broadsides of lead which Frederick's troops discharged ; but it entirely overdraws the picture when dealing with the stopping effect of this fire, which depended on the number of bullets which struck the enemy, and not on the number which were discharged. I have already quoted Marshal de Saxe on this point. The truth of the case is that Frederick's fire tactics were excessively clumsy, and that, in the eighteenth century, they represented what the shock tactics of the Greeks did in the days of the Macedonian phalanx. The Greeks reckoned to bring into play, during their charge, about twelve out of their sixteen ranks of pikes per yard of front ; the Prussians now reckoned on discharging about twelve bullets per yard per minute ; both formations, from a purely spectacular point of view, appear to be irresistible. The truth is, however, exactly the reverse, the reason being that brute force seldom compensates for lack of skill, and as the phalanx was ultimately destroyed by a few agile swordsmen, so was the solid line of Frederick discomfited by a few skilful tirailleurs. Even if we assume Colonel Maude's analysis to be correct, it must not be forgotten that it was, and still is, utterly impossible to deliver aimed fire from platoons of men packed together like herrings in a barrel. A two-foot frontage, with a modern rifle, let alone an

eighteenth century firelock which weighed 16 lbs. and which when fired gave forth a jet of flame some nine inches high from its pan, would defeat all hope of accuracy. Further, the dense cloud of smoke resulting from the first discharge rendered accurate aim for subsequent volleys impossible.

Robert Jackson showed a higher grasp of fire tactics than Frederick when he wrote :

“The open order is evidently the order for . . . the use of firearms ; the close order, the order for the direct charge and impulse of force—bayonet or pike. This is obvious to anyone who considers things in their reasons ; but, however obvious to reason the truth of the fact may be, it is doubtful in how far it has been understood and applied in practice according to principle. A volume of fire poured out from a solid line may be considered as the act of a mere machine. The machine has no distinct idea with respect to direction, consequently its act is an act at random—uncertain, and comparatively harmless. Fire, as proceeding from ranks in open order, it is reasonable to believe, will be effective, for it is independent, and will not be given by a skilful soldier except under a calculable chance of striking.”<sup>1</sup>

By means of his new system of tactics, Frederick won his first two Silesian campaigns. He outmanœuvred his enemy on nearly every occasion, and,

<sup>1</sup> “A View of the Formation, Discipline and Economy of Armies.” Robert Jackson. 1804.

by placing his main force obliquely to his enemy's flank, completely rolled it up and so won battle after battle. His movements were always made in open column, no skirmishers being used. His tactics, except for the absence of light troops, were purely Grecian, movement, followed by shock in place of demoralisation culminating in the charge. Like Grecian tactics, his were purely mechanical, and his battles were won on a preconceived plan as if by clockwork. As the Grecian phalanx destroyed all other phalanxes, through the superiority of its mechanical regularity, so did the Prussian line destroy all other lines; but as the Grecian phalanx was ultimately destroyed by the more flexible legions of Rome, so were the Prussian lines destroyed by the more active columns and skirmishers which characterised the armies of the French Revolution under the skilful leadership of Bonaparte who based his tactics on the old tactics of Cæsar.

#### FREDERICK AND THE AUSTRIAN LIGHT TROOPS

Whilst the Prussian grenadier, bepowdered, befrogged and bepipeclayed, was gyrating to the drum-tap on the parade ground at Potsdam, bands of wild Croats and Pandours were being raised in Austria, which, at Kolin, in 1757, were to give Frederick's tactics a rude shaking.

In 1756, the Austrians raised many light troops,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "A General Essay on Tactics." M. Guibert. London, 1781.

and the following year at Kolin, whilst Frederick was once again attempting his now stereotyped manœuvre, these proved the danger of persistently neglecting the principles of war. Whilst manœuvring under the enemy's eyes, the right flanks of Frederick's columns had to pass by several villages and some broken ground both of which were held by the Austrian light troops. Such a galling fire was brought to bear against Frederick's right flank, that his men piecemeal formed front to the fire,<sup>1</sup> and as this took place before they had reached their oblique position of attack, the whole plan collapsed, the result being that Frederick was defeated with the loss of 14,000 men and 43 guns.

In the following year, during the campaign of 1758, Loudon, who had had much experience in handling the Austrian light troops, renewed an interesting proposal he had made some time before. He suggested that two battalions of grenadiers should be permanently attached to his Croats. "These . . ." he said, "though animated by incontestable courage, were not accustomed to make an attack in close order; they had been taught to spread themselves out as skirmishers, and as such they were invaluable; but, if supported by a solid body of some 1,800 grenadiers their value would be quadrupled. The request was granted."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the very same month in which these grenadiers were incor-

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<sup>1</sup> Napoleon criticising the Prussian attack at Kolin said: "It is the instinct which forbids men to allow themselves to be killed without defending themselves," which made the Prussian form to their right flank.

<sup>2</sup> "Loudon." p. 91. Colonel G. B. Malleon.

porated, Loudon quitted Vienna to take over another command, and was never able to see his plan put into execution. It is a remarkable fact that though Loudon was a skilful light infantry leader, he cannot have entirely grasped the full advantage to be gained from light infantry ; for, at Leignitz, in 1760, when he was instructed to occupy the heights of Pfaffendorf, the occupation of which would have cut Frederick's line of retreat, he attempted to do so without using skirmishers to his front, so that he might surprise the enemy with his full force. The result was that he himself was surprised, for on approaching the heights he found them already occupied by the Prussians. The reason for this may have been that his light troops were so wanting in training that he could not trust them out of his sight ; in any case it was a risky operation.

His defeat at Kolin opened Frederick's eyes to the necessity of light troops for the protection of his army. Shortly after this battle he increased the one company of riflemen he possessed to a battalion ;<sup>1</sup> and, copying the methods of the Austrians, he collected deserters, smugglers and the wild spirits among his own people<sup>2</sup> and formed them into a kind of light infantry. Frederick also raised Jägers, or huntsmen, who were accustomed to use the more accurate sporting rifle.

All these light troops, Austrian, Prussian and

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<sup>1</sup> "History and Campaigns of the Rifle Brigade," p. 4. Colonel W. Verner.

<sup>2</sup> "Organisation." Colonel H. Foster.

French, save for the corps of Grassin, were virtually sharpshooters. They were not employed as the forerunners of the decisive attack, but simply to annoy and "snipe" the enemy on every possible occasion, or to act as a manœuvre screen to cover the regular infantry's advance. They were not light troop as Hannibal knew them, or as Sir John Moore was to understand them, namely, a highly trained body of infantry, but independent riflemen, similar to the hillmen of the North-West Frontier of India, or to the Boers of the South African veldt. They possessed, however, the essential virtues of light troops—they were good shots, agile, intelligent and self-reliant—and when later these *freischarren*, free hordes, were disciplined and combined with the troops of the line, we find reviving once again the ancient glories of the art of war.<sup>1</sup>

At about this time, when Frederick was learning the lesson of Kolin, we find the Duke de Broglie<sup>2</sup> forming special corps of Chasseurs in the French

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<sup>1</sup> "A General Essay on Tactics," p. 311. M. Guibert. London, 1781.

<sup>2</sup> Prior to 1760, so the "Encyclopédie Méthodique" states, Chasseurs were unknown in the French Army. At this time M. de Broglie formed one company of them in each of the battalions he commanded. On January 4th, 1760, the King raised two corps of Chasseurs. One was attached to Berchiny's Hussars, the other to Turpin's. Each corps consisted of 5 companies, one of which was a grenadier company 60 strong. Chasseurs *à pied* were raised in 1776, one company was allotted to each infantry regiment. The men were chosen with great care. A company consisted of 144 men in 8 squads, 2 squads formed a sub-division, 2 sub-divisions a division. Vol. I., pp. 585, 586.



Army. "He gave to each battalion a light company, and expected his whole infantry to fight in extended order." In 1759, at Bergen, he employed light infantry with signal success; he again employed them, in 1760, in the manner suggested by Guibert, namely, as trained troops and not as an irregular rabble.

Duhesme informs us that Frederick's chasseurs *à pied*, as he calls them, were raised by him chiefly to oppose the Pandours and for escort work. This assertion is fully supported by Frederick's own instructions,<sup>1</sup> in which we read:

"Hussars and Pandours are formidable to those only who are unacquainted with them."<sup>2</sup> They are

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<sup>1</sup> "Military Instructions written by the King of Prussia for the Generals of his Army. . . . Together with Short Instructions for the use of his Light Troops," pp. 91-94. London, 1762.

<sup>2</sup> This was evidently bluff on the part of Frederick, for in a letter of Major-General Joseph York to his father, the Earl of Hardwicke, written from the Hague on July 31, 1758, we read of a conversation he had with Frederick the Great in which the king told him that. (See "Life and Correspondence of Philip York, Lord Chancellor Hardwicke," Vol. III., p. 224). P. C. Yorke.

" . . . The most formidable enemy he has to fight with are the Croats, commonly called the Pandours, who are a hardy, brave people, faithful to their sovereign and indefatigable. There is no instance of their deserting, and not only that, but they prevent the regular troops from getting away likewise. His Majesty has, by dint of pains and precautions, got the better of the apprehensions his troops had of them; and by giving them no quarter in the two last campaigns he has reduced them to be more civilised. He owned to me that he was more upon his guard against them than against any other troops, and that he

never courageous. . . . Our troops have nothing to fear from them; but as their skirmishing retards a march, and as they now and then kill a few men, whom we are sorry to lose in such a manner, I shall prescribe such means as will most effectually counteract their attempts. . . .

"If you are retreating thro' a plain, the Hussars may be dispersed by a few volleys of cannon, and the Pandours by your Hussars and Dragoons, of whom they are terribly afraid. . . ." When passing through woods numerous flankers should be thrown out, "each line of infantry must be intermixed with small parties of Dragoons. . . ."

"The Pandours frequently lie flat upon the ground, and discharge their pieces in that situation. . . . Neither the fire of your musketry, nor your cannon charged with grape shot can do them much mischief, as they are generally con-

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hoped I didn't believe that he had that contempt of them that he expressed; but that he found no other way to inspire a confidence into his troops than by treating them as *canaille*, or the lowest of soldiers; that it was impossible for him to oppose anything equal to them in that land, and that he did not like to be always sacrificing his regular infantry in that kind of war; that he had, therefore, raised a number of free battalions, but that did not suffice, nor were they anything to compare in goodness; but that was the only resource he had against them except his artillery, of which they were much afraid."

This is further confirmed by Frederick himself in his "Histoire de mon Temps." He writes: "Chaque botte de paille coûtait du sang. Moratz, Trenk, Nadasty et Frankini étaient infatigables, et l'on peut dire qu'ils donnaient les premières leçons dans l'art de la petite guerre."



cealed behind trees, or laid flat upon their bellies.

"The most successful method of dislodging the enemy from any of their posts which are defended only by light troops, is to attack it at once briskly without ceremony, for as they are accustomed to a straggling method of fighting, they are unable to bear the shock of a regular onset."

In these instructions we find much sound advice, such as in the last paragraph, which contains the essence of how to defeat light infantry and irregulars. But it must be remembered that to attack light infantry briskly, as Frederick lays down, it is necessary to have troops as mobile as the enemy. Such troops, to all intents and purposes, Frederick did not possess; he relied on his Hussars<sup>1</sup> for emergencies. Also we find that advanced guard duties and patrols are carried out by his mounted men. Only once, throughout these Instructions, do we find mention of "foot-hunters"; but for this solitary exception, the duties of his light infantry, and by 1762 he had raised a few, are only conspicuous through their absence.

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<sup>1</sup> On his accession to the throne Frederick had 720 Hussars; at his death these numbered 15,000. The first regiment of Light Dragoons was raised in England by General Elliot in 1769, no other was added until 1773. See "A Partial Reorganization of the British Army," p. 42. General J. Money.

## FREDERICK'S USE OF ARTILLERY

Besides the broadside fire of his heavy infantry, Frederick largely relied on his artillery to demoralise the enemy so that his cavalry could charge home. During the Seven Years' War, the Austrians greatly increased their artillery and made such good use of cover by ground, that Frederick attached howitzers to his infantry regiments in order to search the rear slopes of the positions occupied by the Austrians. This howitzer fire may be compared to the high angle fire of the early Grecian archers, when, from behind the phalanx, they discharged their arrows over the heads of the pikemen. In his latter campaigns, however, Frederick invariably avoided battle as far as it was possible.

This massing of artillery by Frederick the Great was not only due to the fact that his defeat at Kolin had been partially caused by the superiority of the Austrian artillery, but because, as his movements in column towards a flank could not be covered by the fire of skirmishers, gun-fire had to be used instead ; it thus came about that artillery fire took the place of infantry fire. At Olmutz, 1758, Frederick issued his memorable order that sixty pieces were to advance against the enemy's flank which had been chosen for the point of attack, until they were close enough to fire case. "The King's views, however, went further. He said to himself that the artillery was not only casually to prepare the

victory, it must also be adapted so as to be able to search out the enemy when the *terrain* concealed him from view, or the cannon from other reasons were insufficient to do so. He, consequently, increased his howitzers to an extent previously unheard of, and they constituted one-third of the whole of his artillery."<sup>1</sup> Frederick the Great had by now become convinced that the act of demoralisation must be carried out by the artillery and artillery alone. "The whole of the howitzers," he says in his Instructions, issued on May 3rd, 1768, "must be brought to that place according to which of the enemy's flanks is to be attacked . . . and the artillery officers must direct their fire so that the fire from all the batteries shall be concentrated right upon that spot where the attack is to be made . . . and the howitzers must, when the enemy has been driven away, follow him up; and it must be the chief object of the artillery officers who command these batteries, to concentrate them on the second place as much as they did upon the first, and bring a cross-fire to bear upon the heights with the batteries which surround the position."

Before the invention of firearms, weapons themselves forced the tactical division of heavy and light infantry upon the commanders of armies. Hannibal, in his inherent greatness as a light infantry commander, gave his Baliares a spear and shield as well as a sling, so that they might temporarily, if

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<sup>1</sup> "The Influence of Firearms upon Tactics," p. 60.

not permanently, combine the tactics of light and heavy infantry, or missile throwers and stabbers. The invention of the musket and bayonet had produced a weapon eminently suited to this combined method of fighting, and it is astonishing that Frederick never once, in his many battles, really grasped this system of attack.

## CHAPTER V

## The American Wars, 1748-1760

## EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MILITARY ORGANISATION

DURING the eighteenth century, as during the centuries which preceded it, wealth was not sufficient to enable kings to raise large national armies, neither would it have been their policy to do so, even if it had been, for their authority, autocratic enough in many ways, was still sufficiently limited to render a small, highly-paid and professional army a necessary buttress to their kingship. A national one would have been a danger, for national armies frequently tend towards republican government. So it happens that, prior to the eighteenth century, we find in most countries a small standing army of highly trained heavy infantry, and that when war broke out this nucleus was usually supplemented by a rabble of militias, volunteers and free-booters.

By the date of the accession of Frederick the Great, standing armies had become not only formidable in size, but so highly drilled that in some countries, such as Prussia, it was not considered worth while raising free corps to support them ;

further, in these days, free corps were a very grave anxiety. Philosophical ideas of humanity were permeating civilised nations, and politics frequently demanded bloodless victories or victories devoid of rapine and plunder. Again, the behaviour, or want of it, on the part of irregular light troops, had a most demoralising effect on the army to which they belonged.

When wars lasted for many years, some of these free corps, at first but a rabble of pillagers, little by little, began to imitate their brothers of the line. They would dress like them, pick up their drill, abandon light infantry tactics to assume with their regulation uniforms the propensities of heavy infantry. When peace was declared, they were, however, generally disbanded; yet on occasions a few corps remained on as troops of the line to augment the regular army so that next time war was declared fresh bands of irregulars had to be raised in their stead. Thus we find, that, though at the beginning of a war, light troops are non-existent, by the end of it, they are plentiful, and frequently, trained as they were, in the rough and ready school of experience, are very efficient fighters.

In the British Army of the eighteenth century this was certainly the case, for no sooner was war declared than irregular troops were hastily improvised, and as hastily were they disbanded when peace was concluded. ". . . The Army was modelled on the system of mediæval companies of soldier-

adventurers"; and the Standing Army "was formed by the negative process of omission to disband. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

#### THE NOVA SCOTIA SETTLEMENT

In 1748, the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle having put an end to the War of the Austrian Succession, the usual reductions took place in the British Army. The troops came home with the glories of war and were at once disbanded by an ungrateful nation to swell the ranks of cut-throats and thieves, and so, having for years cheated the musket, they at length fell victims to the gallows, which were ever ready to receive them. However, I have noted that a spirit of humanity was abroad, and the same spirit, the spirit which gave the eighteenth century a brighter hue than those which preceded it, now compelled the government to establish settlements in Nova Scotia for these disbanded men. This system of military colonisation was copied from the French, who had sent out many old soldiers to Canada; the French in their turn had copied it from the Romans. Shortly after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, four thousand British soldiers with their wives and families sailed for Nova Scotia and founded Halifax. To protect these families, three companies of Rangers were raised; these Rangers, a type of provincial militia, were frequently recruited from huntsmen, and closely resembled the Jägers and Chasseurs of Europe. From these

<sup>1</sup> "The British Army, 1783-1802." Hon. J. W. Fortescue.



we shall eventually see rising, through much adversity, buffeted by ignorance and impeded by stupidity, a new military force which was eventually to develop into the unsurpassed light infantry of the Peninsula War in Spain.

The French speedily resented this British settlement and fomented an Indian war against the settlers, who suffered very considerable damage. In 1754, the French in Canada attempted to secure the Mississippi valley as an outlet for their trade, and began erecting forts on the Ohio river, the natural waterway which links up the Great Lakes with the Mississippi and eventually with the Caribbean Sea. The most important of these forts was Fort Duquesne. This exasperated the British who, at this time, though they were only in possession of the coast line, had their eyes on the hinterland; further, any insult or aggression on the part of the French against the British was, in those days, resented by arms and not by words. The Indian War grew into a Colonial War, in which Washington's name for the first time is mentioned. To support and bring this Colonial War to a successful issue, the Duke of Cumberland, in 1755, dispatched General Braddock and a force of British Regulars from England to capture Fort Duquesne.

#### BRADDOCK'S EXPEDITION

The Duke of Cumberland was a disciple of Frederick the Great; his conception of the ideal



soldier was based on the German model of drill, more drill and still more drill, never one ounce of initiative, and in the carrying out to a nicety the rules and regulations of the academical tactics now the military fashion in all the armies of Europe. "He was as angry," wrote Walpole, "at an officer's infringing the minutest precept of the military rubric as at his deserting his post, and was as intent on establishing the form of spatter dashes and cockades as on taking a town or securing an advantageous situation."

At the time of Braddock's landing in America, there existed in the colonies a class of men from whom, had he grasped what Indian warfare meant, he could, in a few weeks, have raised a force which would have defied defeat.

The early French colonists, Fortescue tells us, lived the free and fascinating life of an Indian in the forest. Every man, therefore, was a skilful woodsman, a good marksman, a handy canoeman, and, in a word, admirably trained for forest fighting.<sup>1</sup> Washington, who was present with Braddock on his ill-fated expedition, must have explained the dangers he would run in trusting almost entirely to heavy infantry, but apparently with no avail. At this time, though the English colonists were principally husbandmen and depended for their protection on their local militias and Rangers, some of them, especially those under the famous Robert

<sup>1</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. II., p. 255. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

Rogers, were highly skilled irregulars. Even as far back as 1637, under Miles Standish and John Underhill, "seventy-seven colonists had boldly attacked an encampment of four hundred Indian warriors and had virtually annihilated them, giving, in fact, as fine an exposition of the principles of savage warfare as is to be found in our history . . ." <sup>1</sup>

In spite of the lessons of history, of which Braddock, in common with the officers of his age, had no knowledge; in spite of local experience and the numerous colonists who could have and must have warned him of the craft of both Indian and French, Braddock, we find, only took with him some fifty Indian scouts, and determined to defeat the most agile and skilful of irregulars—the Redskin of the American forests—by means of the triple line and the broadside volleys of Frederick the Great!

His advance, in 1755, to the Monongahela River, though of no great importance in the history of war, is exceptionally interesting from the point of view of light and heavy infantry tactics; and the battle which was fought shows how utterly useless it was for even the bravest of men to hope to advance successfully, in dense and heavy formations, against agile and skilful sharpshooters, who depended on themselves as well as on each other, and who were as skilful with their rifles as they were dexterous in using cover.

During their pioneer work in Canada, the French

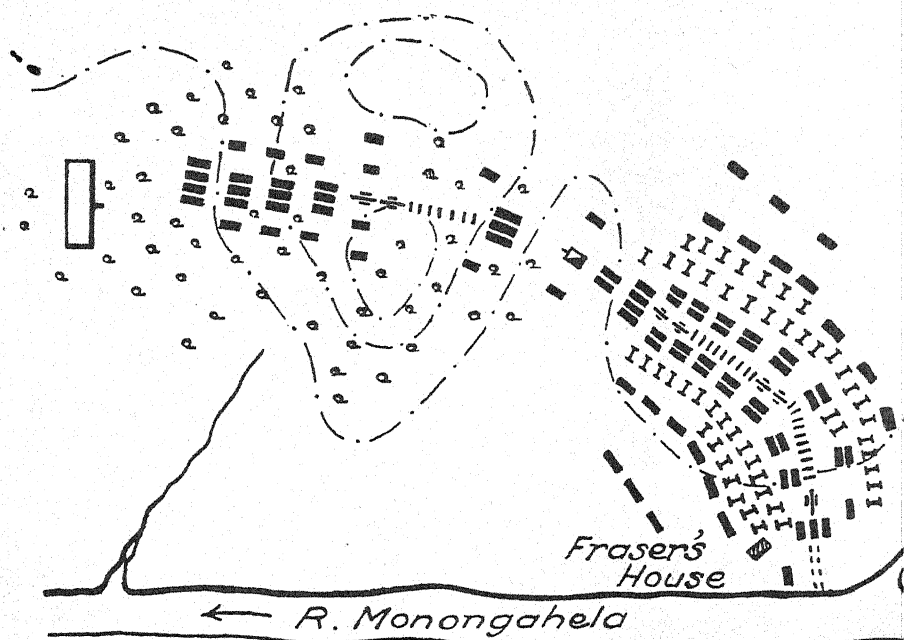
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<sup>1</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. II., p. 255. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

constantly allied themselves with the various Indian tribes, the braves of which were natural adepts in the art of ambuscades and concealment. But their best fighters were their half-breed settlers who combined the courage and determination of the white man with the cunning and agility of the Redskin.

The battle of Monongahela River was fought on June 9th, 1755, between a French force of thirty-six French officers, seventy-two Regular soldiers, one hundred and forty-six Canadians, and six hundred and forty-seven Indians, in all, nine hundred and one officers and men under Captain Beaujeu on the one side, and fourteen hundred and ninety-five officers, non-commissioned officers and men, Regulars and Provincials, under General Braddock on the other.

Beaujeu's tactics were essentially offensive, but he took no care to throw out scouts to protect his advance. General Braddock was more careful; he carried out all the rules of the books to the letter. As an advanced point he sent forward his guides and the Virginian Light Horse; these were followed by a hundred soldiers, under Lieut.-Colonel Gage, as vanguard, and a large body of axemen, for the country through which he marched was virgin forest; behind these came two cannon with tumbrils and tool waggons, and lastly a rear party. Flanking parties were thrown out on both sides of the track. The main body followed in rear observing similar precautions against surprise.



- ..... British.
- ≡ ..... Wagons.
- ⊢ ..... Pack & Cattle.
- ..... French.

BATTLE OF THE MONONGAHELA.



Gage had just passed a small ravine, which the head of the vanguard was about to enter, when he saw a man dressed like an Indian, but wearing the gorget of an officer, bounding forward along the path. The horseman suddenly stopped and waved his hat. In a minute the forest began to swarm with French and savages. They yelled a war whoop, and, spreading themselves to right and left, opened a sharp fire under cover of the trees. Gage wheeled his column into line, and fired several volleys against his now invisible assailants. Few of them were hurt—the trees caught the shot—but the noise was deafening under the dense arches of the forest. The greater part of the Canadians, to borrow the words of Dumas (Beaujeu's second in command), fled shamefully, crying, "*Sauve qui peut!*" Volley followed volley, and at the third Beaujeu dropped dead.

The English moved forward shouting, "God Save the King," and Dumas, now in command, thought that all was lost; but the French officers rallied their men, and while Dumas and the few Regulars left held the track, his savage allies, shrieking their war cries, swarmed through the forest along both flanks of the English, and hiding behind trees, bushes, and fallen trunks, or crouching in gullies and ravines, opened a deadly fire on the helpless soldiery who, themselves completely visible, could see no enemy, and wasted volley after volley on the impassive trees. An invisible death was everywhere—in front, flank, and rear. The British cheer was heard no more.

The troops broke their ranks and, huddled together in a bewildered mass, were cut down by scores.

Braddock now arrived with four hundred men from the main body, but the troops of Gage, falling back on him, caused terrible confusion. Meanwhile the pelting hail of lead continued, the smoke hung in clouds among the branches, but no foe could be seen. Both men and officers were new to this blind and frightful warfare of the savage in his native woods.

The Virginians alone were equal to the emergency. Fighting behind trees like the Indians themselves, they might have held the enemy in check till order could be restored, had not Braddock, furious at a proceeding that shocked all his ideas of courage and discipline, ordered them with oaths to form into line. Some of the Regulars had also tried, in their clumsy way, to fight behind the trees; but Braddock beat them with his sword, and compelled them to stand with the rest—an open mark for the Indians to aim at. The panic increased. So it got worse and worse, the artillery doing great damage to the trees, and little to the enemy; the soldiers loading and firing mechanically into the air at times, and often into their comrades, many of whom were killed. The roar of the cannon and muskets, added to the yells from the throats of six hundred unseen savages, combined to form a “chaos of anguish and terror scarcely paralleled even in Indian warfare.” Braddock was everywhere, storming and cheering like one demented. He had four horses shot under



him. Eventually he ordered a retreat ; the soldiers broke and fled helter-skelter, leaving everything—wounded comrades, baggage, cannon—to the Indians. Braddock himself was now shot down and carried off by a few devoted followers. The Indians scalped and looted and burnt their prisoners alive ; the French had had enough and retired.

The losses of the contending armies are instructive : the English lost sixty-three officers out of eighty-six, and nine hundred and fourteen men out of thirteen hundred and seventy-three. The French had three officers killed and four wounded. The Canadians suffered five casualties and the Indians twenty-seven. A French force of nine hundred irregulars, using Indian tactics, had beaten an English column fourteen hundred and fifty strong, using the tactics of Frederick the Great. The French, who made use of every cover, lost less than five per cent of their force, whilst the English, who did not, lost seventy-three per cent of their officers and sixty-six per cent of their men.

Braddock was not an incapable officer as most historians paint him. He had taken every precaution against surprise ; his only fault was that he attempted to carry out a system of tactics which ninety-nine out of every hundred officers in Europe considered the *ne plus ultra* of perfection. If Frederick the Great himself had been in command of this British column, he could not have done more than Braddock did, and he would have suffered a similar fate. Braddock seems to have realised his



mistake, for on July 11th, just before he died, he pathetically murmured: "Another time we shall know better how to deal with them." His words were prophetic, for a few years later saw the arrival of Howe and Wolfe, who, abandoning much that was useless, replaced the heavy line formations by active skirmishers, and these very soon learnt to beat the French at their own game.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE RAISING OF AMERICAN LIGHT INFANTRY

Braddock's disaster on the wild banks of the Monongahela, due entirely to a lack of light infantry and light infantry tactics, was the first nail driven into the Frederician system of war as applied to the British Army. Notwithstanding the severity of the lesson, from the point of view of tactical principles, fifty years of almost continuous warfare in America, the West Indies, South America, Africa, Europe, and India, were required before the truth was once again appreciated; and then this appreciation was only destined to flare up for some fifteen years, to be lost again in the general decline in warfare which eclipsed all things military after the victory of Waterloo, and which continued dismal and opaque until the introduction of the breechloading rifle. It was, however, also the birthday of a new system, new

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<sup>1</sup> Condensed from the accounts given by Lieut.-Colonel Heneker in "Bush Warfare," pp. 47-53, and "History of the British Army," Vol. II., p. 280-285; by Fortescue. See also Malleeson's "Ambushes and Surprises," Chapter VI.

to the eighteenth century, but as old as war itself.

Christmas Day, 1755, saw the birth of the 60th Royal Americans, under that incomparable light infantry leader Colonel Bouquet, of whom more anon. The magic of the Redskin was abroad, it was casting its solvent spells over the coagulated minds of British generals hypnotised by the gyratings of the Potsdam Grenadiers, and deafened to all common sense by the resounding thud of ten thousand men in line as they charged over the Tiergarten at the goose-step !

In 1757, Lord Howe arrived in America with his Regiment, the 55th. Being a practical man, he at once set himself to learn the art of forest warfare at first hand, and to do so he chose as his instructor Robert Rogers,<sup>1</sup> the famous leader of the Provincial Irregulars, or Rangers. Howe, Fortescue tells us, threw off all the training of the barrack-square, joined the irregulars in their scouting parties, and shared their hardships, adopted their dress, and became one of themselves. Having thoroughly schooled himself, he then proceeded to teach his men. He cut

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Rogers had a very eventful career ; he fought throughout the French and Indian wars in America, and during the Seven Years' War, he commanded and raised various bands of Rangers. He fought under Bouquet throughout the Pontiac War, and later through the American War of Independence. Whilst in England he was much lionised. Later he fought in Africa, and during the Revolutionary Wars raised both the Queen's and King's Rangers. He died in England. His brother, James Rogers, was also well known as a partisan. "The Making of Canada," p. 150. A. G. Bradley.

the skirts off their coats and the hair off their heads, browned the barrels of their muskets, gave them leggings, emptied their knapsacks of pomatums, greases and powders, and filled them with thirty pounds of meal. In a word, he headed a reaction against the stiff, impractical school of Prussia, so much favoured by Cumberland, and set up in its place a training based on experience. Such ideas were not patent to Lord Howe, for others had thought of them before, and were thinking of them at this very time. Colonel Bouquet, of the 60th Royal Americans, wished to dress his men like Indians, Washington wished to do the same, and Brigadier Forbes emphatically asserted: "We must learn the art of war from the Indians!" There was, in fact, a general revolt on the part of all practical-minded men against powder and pipeclay for bush fighting, and Lord Howe and others were fortunately in a position to turn it to account.<sup>1</sup>

In 1758, probably due to Lord Howe's influence, the 80th Regiment was raised.<sup>2</sup> It was known as Gage's Light Infantry, and was designed for the purpose of scouting and skirmishing. In the following year, 1759, Colonel Morgan raised a battalion of Irish Light Infantry in Ireland known as the 90th

<sup>1</sup> Condensed from "History of the British Army," Vol. II., p. 329. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

<sup>2</sup> The 80th, or Gage's "Regiment of light-armed foot," and the 85th were disbanded in 1763, re-raised in 1778, disbanded again in 1784, and again raised in 1794. See "History and Campaigns of the Rifle Brigade," p. 11. Colonel W. Verner.

Regiment,<sup>1</sup> which was at once sent to America. The 85th Regiment was also styled light infantry.

#### ABERCROMBY

Braddock's defeat called for immediate action on the part of the home government, and Abercromby was, in 1757, sent out to prosecute the war in place of Loudon ; he was appointed Commander-in-Chief in America. His plan comprised three definite objectives :

(1) To besiege Louisburg with fourteen thousand regular troops under Amherst.

(2) To take Fort Duquesne. For this work Brigadier-General Forbes was chosen, and he was given nineteen hundred Regulars and five thousand Provincials.

(3) To operate against Montreal and Quebec. These operations Abercromby reserved to himself and Brigadier-General Lord Howe. The force was to consist of ten thousand Regulars and twenty thousand Provincials.

For the siege of Louisburg, there being no light infantry regiments or companies at hand, it was

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<sup>1</sup> Colonel's Morgan Light Infantry, raised in 1759, saw service at the Siege of Belle Isle, 1761, and at the capture of Martinique and Havana. It was disbanded in 1763, raised again in 1778, disbanded in 1784, and re-raised in 1794 under the name of 90th Perthshire Volunteers, when it was trained as a light infantry battalion. The Perthshire Volunteers eventually became the 2nd Battalion of the Scottish Rifles. See "Records and Badges of the British Army," p. 234. H. M. Chichester and G. Burges Short.

found necessary to improvise them, and five hundred and fifty marksmen were drawn from the different regiments including some seventy or eighty men of the 60th Royal Americans. These were called "The Light Infantry," and were placed under the command of a certain Major Scott. From a work entitled "An Authentic Account of the Reduction of Louisbourg," London, 1758, we learn that these marksmen were chosen "out of the most active, resolute men from all the battalions of Regulars; dressed some in blue, some in green jackets and drawers for the easier brushing through the woods. . . . Their arms were a fusil, cartouche-box and a powder-horn." <sup>1</sup>

At the capture of Louisburg on June 8th, 1758, Wolfe's column consisted of five companies of grenadiers, "The Light Infantry," a body of American Rangers, Fraser's Highlanders, and eight companies of grenadiers in support. This mixing of grenadiers and light infantry, soldiers possessing shock and missile power, strongly reminds us of Loudon's system adopted in Austria this very year.

Brigadier-General Forbes, who was in command of the operations against Fort Duquesne, was a remarkable man and a very capable light infantry leader. He began life as a medical student, but tiring of messing pills he entered the Scots Greys and was trained in the old school of Prussia. In spite of this,

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<sup>1</sup> "The Annals of the King's Royal Rifle Corps," p. 47. Capt. Lewis Butler. Also "History of the British Army," Vol. II., p. 323. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

he at once recognised the necessities of the new art of war. He carefully studied Braddock's failure, and based his light infantry tactics on the principles laid down in Turpin's "*Essai sur la Guerre*."

He carried out his advance on Fort Duquesne in short stages, establishing along the road, every forty miles, fortified magazines. The capture of Fort Frontenac decided the fate of Fort Duquesne, for, on November 25th, the French blew up the latter. Fort Duquesne once gained, Forbes planted a stockade round the few remaining huts and rechristened the place "Pittsburg" in honour of the minister.

Abercromby's operations against Quebec resulted in his advance up lake, St. George and Champlain, and terminated in his disastrous Ticonderoga campaign. This campaign, from the point of view of this book, is only interesting in so far that light infantry took a considerable part in it, and that, on July 6th, 1758, Lord Howe was killed. This was a most serious loss, as Abercromby was a less competent general, Howe being described by Wolfe as "the best soldier in the British Army." During the advance up lake St. George, Robert Rogers and his Rangers acted as advanced guard, Howe and his light infantry leading the way, Gage following with part of his newly raised light infantry. In the attack which followed on the French stockade, the Rangers and the light infantry formed a skirmishing screen behind which the assaulting columns advanced; as these approached, the skirmishers cleared the front. After the disastrous failure the



columns withdrew, again covered by their admirable skirmishers.

#### AMHERST

In 1759, Amherst raised further light infantry from the marksmen of his battalions, and on occasions he formed his men into two ranks in place of three. Fortescue asserts that it was Amherst and not Wolfe who was the true conqueror of Canada. As a light infantry leader he grasped the principle understood by both Marshal de Saxe and Marshal Loudon, that sharpshooters were not true light infantry, but that they were the very best material out of which light infantry might be fashioned. Further, that a thorough training was just as necessary for them as it was for the heavy infantry of the line. By Amherst's order, "Special corps of light troops and of marksmen were organised, and the drill of the whole army was modified to suit new conditions. It was, in fact, Amherst who showed the way to the reform of reducing the depth of the ranks to two men only. . . ." <sup>1</sup> This was a most important reform, and until it had been authorised no speedy training of light infantry was possible. Later on we shall see that the light infantry drill of the period pivoted on the two-deep formation; file-movements and skirmishing movements alike depended on it, as well as extensions and closings.

<sup>1</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. II., p. 409. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

## WOLFE

Wolfe, who was just as much alive to the necessity of a light infantry force as Amherst, raised and organised a considerable number of these troops. Wolfe was an officer of the new school—he was a humanitarian as well as a disciplinarian;<sup>1</sup> and though it would be a platitude now to state that no man can instil true discipline without understanding human nature, it was far from being so a hundred and sixty-six years ago. To discipline is to control, to control is to understand. An engineer who understands his machine can control it, not so a man who does not understand it, in spite of the fact that he may set the machine in motion. Wolfe, Fortescue writes, was one of the founders of the new school, the school which was beginning to realise that true discipline consisted in cultivating the natural virtues of the man and not of brutalising them by attempting to suppress his vices in a brutal manner. He contrived “to turn even the work of road-making in Scotland to

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<sup>1</sup> Further, Wolfe, like so many other great generals, was a student of history. James, in his “Military Dictionary,” Second Edition, under article, “Regimental Library,” gives the following anecdote:

“Having shown some general officers how expert his men were at a new mode of attacking and retreating upon hills, he stepped up to one of them and asked what he thought of it. “I think,” said he, “I see something here of the history of the Carduchi, who harassed Xenophon, and hung upon his rear in his retreat over the mountains.” “You are right,” said Wolfe, “I had it thence; but our friends, here, are surprised at what I have shown them, because they have read nothing.”



excellent disciplinary account ; and, indeed, I am disposed to think that this same road-making, first begun under the direction of the mild and gentle Wade, had much to do with the foundation of the new school. The officers were brought very much more into contact with their men off parade, being obliged to supervise them while at work and to enjoin on them conciliatory bearing and behaviour towards the inhabitants ; and the men, on their side, were happy and well-conducted, for they were kept constantly employed and received a welcome addition to their pay.”<sup>1</sup>

The following corps composed the army of Major-General James Wolfe in his famous and daring attack on Quebec :

“Three companies of Royal Artillery, and the following Regiments of Foot : 15th, 28th, 35th, 43rd, 47th, 48th, 2nd/60th, 3rd/60th, 78th, Louisburg Grenadiers ; a company of Light Infantry from (each regiment in) the Army ; a company of Light Infantry from the garrison of Louisburg ; six companies of New England Rangers ; one company of New England Carpenters ; the Grenadiers of the army under Colonel Carleton ; the Light Infantry under the Hon. Colonel Howe.”<sup>2</sup>

On September 13th, 1759, the attack on Quebec took place. A party of twenty-four light infantry-

<sup>1</sup> “History of the British Army,” Vol. II., p. 578. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

<sup>2</sup> “The Annals of the King’s Royal Rifle Corps,” Vol. I., p. 291. Capt. Lewis Butler.

men under their leader, Colonel William Howe, brother of Lord Howe, were the first to land from the boats. This party formed the advanced-point, and crept up the two hundred feet of cliff which separates the St. Lawrence from the Plains of Abraham. It was only when the cheers of Howe's "forlorn hope" were heard, that Wolfe gave the signal for his men to swarm up the narrow track and join their comrades, in what was destined to be one of the most far-reaching victories in British history.

#### MONTGOMERY

The next year, 1760, a small mixed force, under Colonel Montgomery, was attacked whilst in a wooded valley by a much superior force of Red Indians. It was just five years since Braddock's force had been attacked in a similar manner and position, and all but destroyed. Montgomery and his men, however, did not form a triple line; he and his light infantry and grenadiers at once plunged into the forest and *attacked* his assailants, whilst his Highlanders, hastening round their flanks, *attacked* them in rear, and threatened their line of retreat. The result was a signal victory and the Indians were put to flight with great slaughter.

Five years in the rough school of war had taught Englishmen how to fight, besides how to parade for fighting. The peace-trained schools at home repudiated these ideas for nearly half a century.

The moral of this is that one experience in war is worth a decade of arguments during peace, and that if we wish to build up theories of war we should build them on these war experiences, for they are of rock, in place of trusting to the sandy foundations of flatulent pedants which are blown from under our feet by the first cannonade of war.

## CHAPTER VI

## The 60th Royal Americans

## THE RAISING OF THE ROYAL AMERICANS

BRADDOCK'S disaster on the Monongahela River, in 1755, came as a surprise and as a shock to the British Army at home. The significance of this defeat seems, however, to have been fully grasped by the Duke of Cumberland, for, according to Major Patrick Murray, who served in the 60th Royal Americans, a M. von Harbot, a Swiss, belonging to the canton of Berne, hearing of Cumberland's difficulties, made a proposal to a countryman of his, a M. Jacque Prevost, to raise in America a four-battalion regiment of Provincials under a British Colonel-in-Chief, but with a fair sprinkling of foreign officers in it. This proposal was accepted by the British Government, and £80,178 16s. was granted for this purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Prevost was a soldier of fortune, he had seen service in Holland, he now spared no pains to collect officers for the new regiment, and Henry Bouquet

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<sup>1</sup> "History of England," Vol. III., chap. 24, p. 214. Smollett.

and Frederick Haldimand, Swiss officers of distinction, then serving in the body-guard of the Prince of Orange, were appointed to the lieutenant-colonelcies of the first and second battalions.

The purpose of the Royal Americans was to form a body of regular troops capable of "combining the qualities of the scout with the discipline of the trained soldier." They were, in fact, true light infantry and the first true light infantry the British Standing Army ever had. It is quite possible that Prevost, if not Bouquet and Haldimand as well, had learnt what true light infantry should be like from the light troops of Marshal de Saxe.

Though the actual order to raise the regiment was not dated until March 4th, 1756, which placed the establishment of the regiment at four battalions of ten companies each, in all four thousand four hundred men, the date of the commission of Lord Loudon, Christmas Day, 1755, has usually been considered the birthday of the Regiment.

"The nucleus of the regiment having been raised, it sailed for Pennsylvania, in which district lived a large colony of backwoodsmen—English, Swiss, Tyrolese and German—who would supply it with recruits."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the above has been taken from "The Annals of the Kings Royal Rifle Corps," Vol. I., pp. 2-25. By Capt. Lewis Butler. Whilst debates on the subject of raising the troops suggested by M. von Harbot were going on, Major Patrick Murray informs us: "Ten new regiments were raised, in consequence of which delay the Royal Americans were numbered the 62nd instead of being the 52nd Regiment . . . when in consequence

At this time the number of German settlers in America was considerable. In 1750, out of a population of 270,000, there were no less than 90,000 Germans in Pennsylvania; forty years later they numbered 144,600.<sup>1</sup> Many of these had been driven there from the Pfalz by Louvois' persecution. Pennsylvania formed, therefore, a magnificent recruiting ground for the new battalions.

On June 15th, 1756, the forty German officers who were to raise recruits to the number of four thousand for Loudon's Royal Americans arrived.<sup>2</sup> In the following year, Lord Howe was commissioned colonel of the Regiment.

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of the capture of the 50th and 51st Regiment at Oswego, these two regiments were disbanded, the Royal American Regiment became the 60th." This is an interesting coincidence. The first light infantry ever raised in the British Army were the Black Watch, originally the 43rd; the second the 62nd, which but for a short delay would have been the 52nd; eventually, in 1803, the 43rd and 52nd became the first two permanent light infantry regiments in the British Army.

<sup>1</sup> "The German Soldier in the Wars of the United States," p. 30. J. G. Rosengarten. See also the "Memoirs of Mme. von Riedesel," and "Die Deutschen Hulfstruppen im Nord Amerikanischen Befreiungskreige, 1776 bis 1783," pp. 271-397. By Max von Eelking.

• Many of the most noted hunters and Indian fighters were of German origin. Lewis Wetzel is one of the most famous. Once pursued by four Indians he loaded his rifle as he ran, and killed in succession the three foremost, whereat the other fled. In all he took over thirty scalps of warriors, thus killing more Indians than were slain by either of the forces of Braddock or St. Clair during their disastrous campaigns.

The Germans, Tyrolese and Swiss introduced the rifle into America.

<sup>2</sup> "History of the United States," Vol. III., p. 155. Bancroft.

## THE BATTLE OF BUSHY RUN

In 1760, after the fall of Montreal, Amherst sent Major Rogers to effect the capitulation of the French troops on the Great Lakes. The French had built a series of rude forts; these, being surrendered to Rogers, were at once garrisoned by detachments of the 60th Royal Americans. The Indians deeply resented this change of masters, and Pontiac, an Indian of remarkable ability, planned a great confederation of all the Indian tribes so that he might destroy these British posts. He cut the line of forts, some containing the most microscopic garrisons, and Amherst, seeing the danger of an extensive Indian war, at once despatched Colonel Bouquet to nip the rebellion in the bud.

Bouquet's force consisted of some five hundred Regulars of the 42nd, 60th, and 77th—Montgomery's Highlanders. At Fort Bedford he engaged thirty backwoodsmen, and, by August 4th, had reached a place about four miles from Fort Ligonier. On the 5th, he was attacked at Bushy Run. Murray describes the advanced guard as resolutely returning the fire of the Indians until sustained by the Highland Light Infantry. But things on this day went badly with Bouquet's gallant little army, and it sustained heavy losses. On the 6th, however, the attack was renewed, and by a clever ruse Bouquet drew the Indians on, and then turning on them utterly routed them. "It was a magnificent performance."

The results of Bushy Run were the completion



and solidification of the victories and labours of Amherst and Wolfe, a complete effacement of the disasters of Monongahela and Ticonderoga, and the release of many hundreds of European prisoners who had been kept by the Indians in captivity for a number of years. At a meeting between a mother and daughter who had been long separated we realise the true kindness of Bouquet's nature. The story goes: "One woman recognised her daughter who had been carried off nine years before, but the girl had entirely forgotten her mother and utterly failed to return her passionate embraces. Bouquet was standing by, and his suggestion at the moment reveals his imaginative mind. 'Sing her songs,' said he, 'that you used to sing to your child.' Then memory returned, and with a flood of tears the girl buried herself in her mother's arms."<sup>1</sup> A man with so acute an insight into human nature as this, was a worthy founder of the training and discipline of British light infantry, which, fifty years later, was to be worthily completed by his successor, Sir John Moore.

#### • BOUQUET'S DISCIPLINE

Colonel Bouquet, we learn from the *Annals* of his famous Regiment, was a well read and highly educated man, and this is at once apparent on studying his voluminous correspondence and on

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<sup>1</sup> "The *Annals of the King's Royal Rifle Corps*," Vol. I., p. 191. Capt. Lewis Butler.



reading his admirable treatise on his "Expedition against the Ohio Indians." He had seen much service in Europe under the Prince of Orange, but was in no way corrupted by the formal tactics of his age. He saw that brutality brutalised and did not reform; he saw that if his men were trained intelligently in place of mechanically, kindly in place of harshly, they *must* beat either untrained Redskins or soldiers trained according to the system of Frederick the Great. Intelligent co-operation was the basis of his training and that of Colonel Haldimand,<sup>1</sup> each member of his regiment being trained mentally as well as physically. By the adoption of Indian dress, he at one stroke did away with the senseless trappings which delighted the heart of Cumberland. He studied Indian warfare, not to copy it—this would have indeed but shown his incapacity to overcome it—but to discover its nature so that he might devise a system of tactics whereby he could destroy it. As we shall see, he did devise such a system, and thenceforth, even on ground of their own choosing, the Redskins found not only their match in the men of the Royal Americans, but their master.

The training of Colonel Bouquet's men was organised as follows :

"The soldiers before being armed must be taught to keep themselves clean and to dress in

<sup>1</sup> Haldimand is believed to have been at one time in the Sardinian Service and to have served at Mollwitz, 1741, under Frederick the Great.

a soldier-like manner. This will raise in them a becoming spirit, give them a favourable opinion of their profession, and preserve their health. The first thing they are to learn is to walk well, afterwards to run ; and in order to excite emulation small prizes should from time to time be given to those who distinguish themselves. They must then run in ranks in extended order and wheel in that order, at first slowly, but by degrees with increasing speed. This evolution is difficult, but most important in order to fall unexpectedly on the flank of the enemy. The men are to disperse and rally at given signals, and particular colours should be given to each company as rallying points. The men must be trained to leap logs and ditches, and to carry burdens proportionate to their strength.

“ When perfect in these exercises the young soldiers will receive their arms and follow the above-named evolutions on all kinds of ground. They will be taught to handle their arms with dexterity, and without losing time upon trifles to load and fire very quickly standing, kneeling or lying on the ground. They are to fire at a mark without a rest, and not allowed to be long in taking aim. Hunting and the award of small prizes will soon make them expert marksmen.

“ The men should learn to swim, pushing before them on a small raft their clothes, arms and ammunition ; they must also learn to use snow-shoes ; they must be taught to throw up entrenchments, make facines and gabions, as well as to fell trees,

saw planks, construct canoes, carts, ploughs, barrows, roofs, casks, batteaux and bridges, and to build ovens and log-houses. With practice the youngest among them will soon become tolerably good carpenters, masons, tailors, butchers, shoemakers, etc. . . .

"The men should take it in turns to go on hunting expeditions with their officers and remain out of camp for some weeks at a time, taking with them a little flour, but otherwise relying on the game and fish caught.

"Great care is to be taken to preserve purity of manners, order, and decency among the men ; this will be found much easier in the woods than in the neighbourhood of towns. It would be a good plan to give the men only a small portion of their pay in cash, the remainder will be accumulated for them until discharge ; then they would receive the balance due to them and 200 acres of land." <sup>1</sup>

Anyone who reads the above must at once be struck by the vast superiority of Bouquet's system of training over that of our own, controlled by countless regulations as it is. Probably few of Bouquet's men could read or write, but there can be no doubt that if an intelligent officer were offered the choice of a company of Bouquet's men or a company of the present board-school production, which he would accept. His were men, not overgrown boys, they lived and fought like men, they

<sup>1</sup> "The Annals of the King's Royal Rifle Corps," Vol. I., pp. 160, 161. Capt. Lewis Butler.

were recruited not from the unemployed, but from the skilled of the forests and the backwoods where they had been brought up in an atmosphere of danger, not of blue-coated policemen but of scalp-hunting Redskins. They worked like men, and they learnt what a man should learn : to fight at times, and at times to build himself a peaceful home. They conquered Nature by skill and intelligence, by will and muscle, and did not sit down expectant that things would accomplish themselves, or hopeful that others would accomplish them for them. Yet they were of the same flesh and blood as the men of to-day, and human nature does not change much in a century and a half. Why, then, this difference ? Because Bouquet was a man of genius, of character, of originality and of independent thought, he knew what he wanted, and knowing it, he saw that he got it ; he was as untrammelled by the shackles of clerical rule, as free from the hide-bound pedanticisms of mouldering regulations, the pettifoggery and hair-splittings of narrow-minded officials as Napoleon was from Juntas, Dutch Commissioners and Aulic Councils. And the result ? He succeeded where we fail. There is only one true training for the soldier, namely, to *act like a man*, under the certain circumstances of peace and the uncertain circumstances of war. The men of the 60th were not only admirable soldiers, but good carpenters, masons, tailors, butchers and shoe-makers ; in an English company of the present day it would be difficult to find five men who could, or can, boil a potato or

wash a handkerchief properly, let alone build a house or plough a field.

### BOUQUET'S TACTICS

Bouquet's tactics, in his Indian wars, are well worth our careful attention, for not only do they show how a trained light infantry met untrained skirmishers and sharpshooters a hundred and seventy years ago, but they set forth principles of savage warfare as true to-day as then.

The following extracts are, for the most part, taken from his own historical account.<sup>1</sup>

"Experience has convinced me that it is not our interest to be at war with them (the Red Indians); but if, after having tried all means to avoid it, they force us to it . . . we should endeavour to fight them upon more equal terms, and regulate our manœuvres upon those of the enemy we are to engage, and the nature of the country we are to act in. . . .

" . . . They seldom expose their persons to danger, and depend entirely upon their dexterity in concealing themselves during an engagement, never appearing openly, unless they have struck their enemies with terror . . . if they were beat two or three times, they would lose that confidence inspired by success. . . . But this cannot reasonably

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<sup>1</sup> "An Historical Account of the Expedition against the Ohio Indians, in the year MDCCCLXIV., under the command of Henry Bouquet, Esqre," pp. 40-8. 1766.

be expected till we have troops trained to fight them in their own way, with the additional advantage of European courage and discipline.

“Any deviation from our established military system would be needless, if valour, zeal, order and good conduct were sufficient to subdue this light-footed enemy. These qualities are conspicuous in our troops; but they are too heavy, and indeed too valuable, to be employed alone in a destructive service for which they were never intended. They require the assistance of lighter corps, whose dress, arms and exercises, should be adapted to this new kind of war.”

Bouquet, after describing the difficulties which arise in Indian warfare, adds that the tactics of the Indians may be summed up as follows :

“The first, that their general maxim is to surround their enemy.

“The second, that they fight scattered, and never in a compact body.

“The third, that they never stand their ground when attacked, but immediately give way to return to the charge.

“These principles admitted, it follows :

“Firstly, that the troops destined to engage Indians must be lightly clothed, armed and accoutred.

“Secondly, that having no resistance to encounter in the attack or defence, they are not to be drawn up in close order, which would only expose them without necessity to a greater loss.

“And, lastly, that all their evolutions must be performed with great rapidity, and the men enabled by exercise to pursue the enemy closely, when put to flight, and not give them time to rally.”

Bouquet's suggestion was to form a battalion of “hunters,” which is the exact equivalent of the word “Jäger.” This battalion to be five hundred strong, to which was to be attached two troops of light horse<sup>1</sup> or mounted infantry, and a company of artificers composed of frontier men from fifteen to twenty years of age, enlisted for fifteen years, and specially trained for service.

The light horse, besides being armed with a short rifle, carried “a battle-axe with a long handle, the only sort of arms they should make use of in the charge.” . . . “Every light horseman ought to be provided with a bloodhound.”

Bouquet's model column was composed of the following :

Two Regiments of Foot	..	..	..	900
One Battalion of Hunters	..	..	..	500
Two Troops of Light Horse	..	..	..	100
One Company of Artificers	..	..	..	20
Drivers and necessary followers	..	..	..	280
Total	..	..	..	1,800

His order of march is most interesting, and can be clearly followed on the accompanying diagram.

<sup>1</sup> Compare this with the system of Marshal de Saxe.





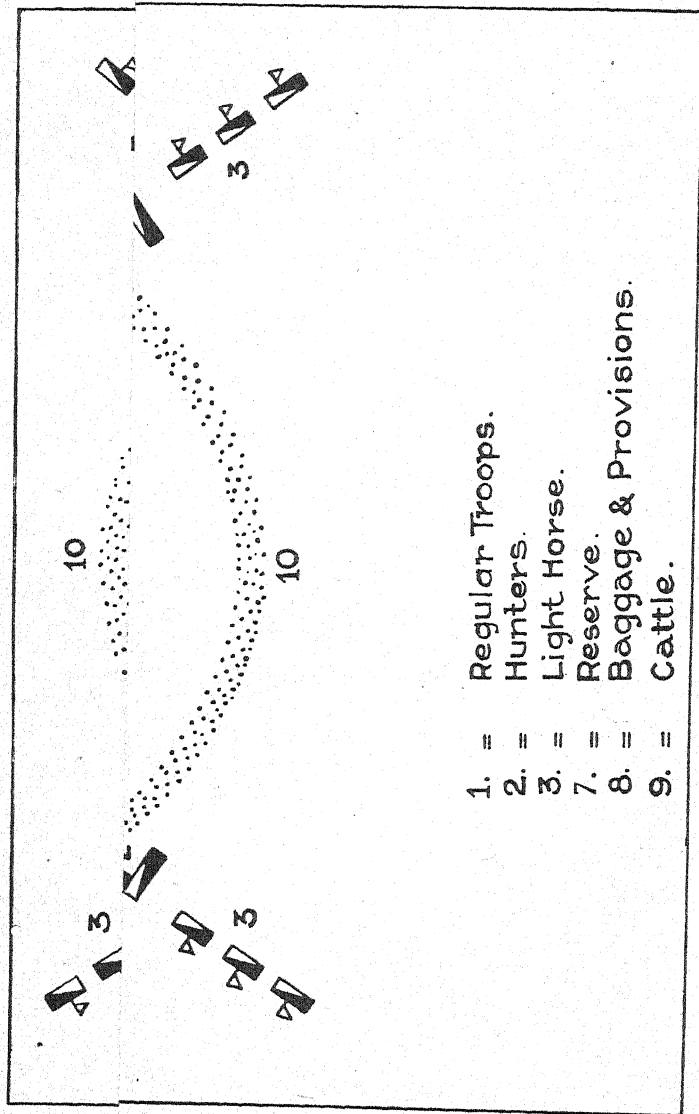
His order for the attack is a model of what an attack against a very active savage foe should be. He first assumed the defensive by forming a square with his regular troops, in which he collected and parked his transport, small advanced posts being thrown out to keep the Indians as far off the square as possible. The square being well-formed and the transport safe within it, its sides simultaneously expanded, the even squads, or sections, moving forward, the odd remaining in their original position ; the corners of the square were strengthened by small parties of Rangers. The even squads now opened a rapid independent fire on the circle of Indians, and under cover of this fire the hunters sallied out in four columns through the intervals followed by the light horse and their blood-hounds, and, forcing their way through the enemy's circle, fell upon his flanks " by wheeling to their right and left and charging with impetuosity." The even squads now " march out briskly and attack the enemy in front," and halt when they are about one hundred yards from the square, whilst the rest of those who have attacked pursue the enemy " till they are totally dispersed."

The great difficulty of an eccentric attack, that is an attack aimed from within against the circumference of a circle, is that the enemy offers no flanks to the attackers ; further, every shot fired from the centre of a circle towards its circumference, if it misses the circumference, is lost ; whilst, theoretically, no shot fired from the circumference towards the centre is wasted. The eccentric force not only

offers flanks to the concentric, but lays itself open to receive frontal, oblique, enfilade and reverse fire, whilst it can only deliver frontal and a partially oblique fire in return.

Bouquet seems to have grasped all these points. First, by means of his advanced posts, he held the enemy at a distance ; secondly, he collected his force together ; thirdly, by four simultaneous charges, covered by fire, he broke the circle into four segments, that is, forced it to offer eight flanks to his attack ; fourthly, he demoralised it by his fire, and, fifthly, pursued and annihilated it by means of his light troops, foot and horse.

This formation against a savage foe is probably the most ingenious and effective that the history of irregular warfare has to record.



BOUQUET'S SYSTEM OF ATTACK, II.

## CHAPTER VII

## The Lessons of the Seven Years' War

## THE SPELL OF ROSSBACH

THE Peace of Paris closed the Seven Years' War, a war in which the oblique line of Frederick had triumphed over the tactics of his enemies. His successes, due to his mobility and to the immobility of his opponents, threw into obscurity the leading tactical lesson of the war, which, in my opinion, was that the fire of light infantry will wreck any column or line unprotected by a light infantry screen. The glamour and glitter of Rossbach and Leuthen dazzled the eyes of the tacticians of the day to the true lessons of Kolin and Höchstkirchen. And the result was, that in place of seeking a new tactics which would destroy the tactics of Frederick, they slavishly adopted his system of attack with all its faults, shut their ears to history, abandoned all common sense, all individuality, and prepared for themselves in a method as thorough as it was thoughtless the disasters they sustained during the Napoleonic wars.

Failing once again to appreciate the value of light infantry, we find that, after the peace of 1763,

as after the peace of 1748, the politicians once again reduced the army and disbanded the light companies, which force of circumstances and the dire necessity of war had impelled its commanders to raise. These reductions were carried out not only to save expense, but because it was still considered that untrained men could be banded together at a moment's notice and dubbed light infantry ; and because the military pedants in London, having grown fat on the stiff mechanical drill of Prussia, could not and would not bring themselves to believe, in spite of all the experiences of the late wars, that light troops were not only an aid, not only a necessity, but an integral part of all skilfully organised armies.

However, in Great Britain, a new school of war was forming, the opinions of which no amount of hair-grease and pipeclay could smother. The times were changing in spite of the rulers of mankind, and men and women were beginning to assert their rights to be treated like human beings in place of movable chattels. This spirit which was sweeping over the mobs of the people was also sweeping over the ranks of the soldiers. Fear, *a tergo*, was the compelling force of the Prussian line ; it was a capricious force ; and one quite unsuited to the British temperament. It might compel armies to march on to the battlefield, but it could not compel them to fight. " Never beat your men," says a military manual of the year 1760, " it is unmanly. I have too often seen a brave, honest old soldier banged and battered at the

caprice of an arrogant officer.”<sup>1</sup> Howe, Wolfe, Monckton, and Murray were all officers of the new school who sought to overcome the vices of their men by cultivating their virtues. The old solid drill was a little, but only a very little, giving way before the new discipline; it was determined to die hard.

During this period a distinct change is to be found in the training of British infantry. In the “Exercise for the Horse, Dragoon, and Foot Forces, London, 1728,” republished in 1739, we find the training of the soldier divided under five headings :

- (1) The Manual Exercise. 59 Sections.
- (2) The Grenadier Exercise. 19 Sections.
- (3) The Evolution. 61 Sections.
- (4) Battalion Movements.
- (5) Street-firing.

This manual is very similar to that of 1690, though the “screw-bayonet” has vanished from it.

In the “Exercise for the Foot,” Limerick, 1758, we find the Grenadier Company still mentioned though not so fully as before; but what we do find in this manual is that the firing exercise is most minutely dealt with in 86 sections. “The Firing as practised by the Guards,” is also fully explained.

By 1758, firing had become the important question in infantry training, and, as far as this went, it was a distinct advance in tactics.

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<sup>1</sup> “History of the British Army,” Vol. II., p. 578. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

## TURPIN'S "ESSAY ON THE ART OF WAR"

In the French Army we see the same process at work. The armies of Louis XV. had received a severe shaking, and, in 1763, immediately peace had been declared, Choiseul set himself the task of re-forming them on the Prussian model. "Frederick the Great was the commander above all others who had humiliated the French, therefore, in Choiseul's view, all changes must be copied from the Prussian model." <sup>1</sup> Detail in place of war training became the order of the day, until, a few years before the French Revolution, Duhesme tells us exactness was pushed to such an extreme—"jusqu'à avoir dans les casernes des horloges à balancier et des échelles géométriques gravées sur les pavés"—(as even to have in the barracks clockwork pendulums, and geometrical scales cut on the pavement). <sup>2</sup>

But the French nation was then, as it is still, not one to submit for long to the antics of a foreign power. Her tacticians soon freed themselves from the spell of Rossbach, so that to their writings, more so than to the deeds of Pandour and Croat, may be traced the steady infiltration of the idea that a *trained* light infantry was a necessity to every civilised army.

Folard, as we have seen, set forth his idea of column, line and skirmisher nearly thirty years before this date (1764). Marshal de Saxe and the Duke de Broglie had greatly improved upon his system; and,

<sup>1</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. IV., p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> "Essai Historique sur l'Infanterie Légère," p. 136. Par le Comte Duhesme, 1864.

contemporaneously with them, M. le Comte Turpin de Crissé, a writer of considerable tactical insight, had fully grasped the value of light infantry in war. He set forth his ideas on light infantry in his "Essai sur l'Art de la Guerre," published in 1754, which, as I have already noted, was studied by Colonel Bouquet. The essentials of his system are as follows :

Light infantry can carry out all the duties of Hussars in covering and protecting an army and in seizing tactical points, but usually regiments of light troops are composed half of foot and half of horse. "The only difference between the duty of light infantry and light horse, during a campaign, is that the latter can march with more facility and expedition to whatever part they are ordered ; in other respects they equally contribute to the security of an army, and, by joining, shelter themselves from every sort of danger ; nothing can stop them, and they are in a manner certain of succeeding in whatever enterprise they undertake." During an attack, light infantry should be employed on the flanks, they should also be used for holding woods, ravines and defiles. "It is certain," writes Turpin, "that light troops are very necessary during war ; it is they who should carry out all the irregular fighting (*guerre de campagne*) ; it is they who should protect both infantry and cavalry whilst foraging, and also guard convoys ; who should reconnoitre the line of march of an army, who will prevent the troops being surprised, and who will save both infantry and cavalry from much fatigue. . . ."



"It is very requisite for an officer of light troops to obtain a thorough individual knowledge of the men under his command, that he may employ them according to their intelligence and courage. One sergeant, corporal or private will answer better for reconnoitring openly the enemy—that is, for approaching him—so as to be able to give a tolerable account of the post which he occupies, and of his force. Another will be better employed as a scout, or in watching the enemy's motions without discovering himself. . . . Others are subject to infirmities, amongst which those of eye sight must be particularly noticed ; and, even among them, some who see well in the daytime are almost blind at night. Some old soldiers have the genius of resources, and having observed some situation or passage, may be able to give good information, which ought to be turned to advantage. And as some are naturally awkward, and easily alarmed, it is very important to know them, in order not to employ them where they might communicate their fears. All those different characters may be easily found out by conversing with the men, and chiefly by attending to their reports."<sup>1</sup>

The essence of Turpin's discipline was common sense in place of plummet and pace-stick—the development of each individual according to his

<sup>1</sup> "Essai sur l'Art de la Guerre," pp. 175-9. M. le Comte Turpin de Crissé. 1754. See also "Light Infantry," by Major A. E. Mockler-Ferryman. "The Oxfordshire Light Infantry Chronicle," p. 299, 1896.

natural gifts and character, in place of attempting to make all soldiers, whatever their dispositions might be, resemble a row of polished knobs on a leather strap.

#### THE TACTICS OF MESNIL-DURAND

Even in France, little attention was paid to Folard, de Saxe, de Broglie and Turpin de Crissé during the years immediately following the Seven Years' War; but the hypnotic influence of this war was not to last long—a brief ten years at most—for soon again we find intelligence reasserting itself in military affairs. Once Frederick's system was adopted, its disadvantages, day by day became more apparent. The slight depth of his battle-line, its great extent, which rendered command most difficult, the want of reserves and skirmishers all showed it to be a system radically faulty; nevertheless in the French Army, as is unfortunately the case at all times in all armies, the smaller minds were in the majority, and were still enthralled by Frederick's successes which were due more to his drill than to his tactics.

When Marshal Bellisle advocated his system of columns, he was severely criticised. His column was to consist of seven hundred and sixty-eight men, thirty-two ranks deep, on a frontage of twenty-four; each of these columns was to be supported by fifty cavalry, and the columns were only to open fire when it was impossible to make use of the bayonet.

This formation was an indifferent one, its tactics were faulty; nevertheless it stimulated discussion, and discussion opened men's eyes to the fact that Frederick's tactics were not the *ne plus ultra* of perfection.

Marshal de Bellisle's great supporter was M. de Mesnil-Durand, who, in 1774, outlined his famous system of tactics:

"He proposed to form battalions in close columns of grand divisions or double companies, and that all deployments should be on the leading double company; he recommended battalions in ten companies, two of which were invariably to skirmish.

"When the battalion was deployed, these companies were on the flanks slightly in rear, so that between battalions deployed in line there was the front of two companies, regiments being composed of four battalions.

"When several battalions worked together they were to be formed in line of double company columns at deploying intervals, covered by the whole of the flank companies as skirmishers.

"Columns, said Mesnil-Durand, mass the greatest amount of force in the smallest space, and alone can, on account of the narrowness of the front and the greatness of the intervals between them, give free movement to cavalry or artillery, but these columns must be linked together by thick chains of skirmishers. Infantry has two weapons to fight with, and it should have two distinct formations: line is the best for firing, column for manœuvres

and attack. In every case, without exception, that formation should be used which is the most suitable at the moment.

"The primitive formation of all troops should be in line of battalions at deploying intervals. So formed, any requisite manœuvre may be easily carried out. The shallow formation has a natural tendency to make men halt and fire, the order in column has a tendency to make men advance.

"When troops are deployed in two lines with cavalry on the flanks, they are weak everywhere, are incapable of the least manœuvre, and the cavalry, artillery and infantry do not support one another.

"When, on the contrary, each battalion is in column, the flank companies being in the battalion intervals, the cavalry placed in rear can easily and unexpectedly charge to the front. This order is strong everywhere; it threatens the enemy with the fire of the skirmishers, the weight of its columns, and the charge of its cavalry. An army so formed can march and manœuvre with the greatest ease and rapidity." <sup>1</sup>

Mesnil-Durand's system may be considered as a new dispensation in the history of tactics. He suggested the employment of light infantry as an integral fighting part of every battalion. He realised that the two weapons, shock and missile, required two formations—the line to demoralise

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<sup>1</sup> "A Précis of Modern Tactics," p. 235. Colonel Robert Home. Revised by Lieut.-Colonel Sisson. C. Pratt. 1892.

and the column to destroy. He based his system absolutely on the tactical rule that fire must prepare shock, and it only required the master-mind of Napoleon to breathe life into his columns in order to prove their essential worth. Mesnil-Durand further advocated the formation of company columns for the same reason as he advocated battalion columns, and he was right, for eventually these small columns ousted the larger ones and became the basis of present day tactics.

#### GUIBERT'S ESSAY ON TACTICS

Guibert has generally been looked upon as an opponent of Mesnil-Durand, but in fact he was not so. Mesnil-Durand's system, through its sheer novelty, at once attracted adherents; the deeds of the Croats, Pandours, and Tyrolese riflemen were now remembered, and Guibert saw that there was a danger of the army veering from one extreme to the other, and of becoming light infantry in place of grenadiers. What Guibert really opposed was the raising of "free-bands" of irregulars in place of relying on trained light infantry. In his "Essay" he writes :<sup>1</sup>,

" If it be possible to create a system of war which renders the great number of light troops of less use in that particular service to which they are appointed to, it is still more so in disciplining the troops of the line to act in concert with them.

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<sup>1</sup> " General Essay on Tactics," pp. 306-11. M. Guibert. London, 1781.

What difference is there between the appointment of a battalion and that of a corps of light troops? Are not the men of the same nature, clothed and armed in the same manner? . . .

“By thus employing troops of the line, and even the *élite* of these troops to act as vanguard, and in all other material business, much greater check will be given to the enemy's operations; this is an important object to be considered, because the bravery and confidence of an army is, in general, acquired by the superiority of their daily success. These *élite* corps in advance are most to be depended on, less subject to be defeated, better adapted to wait for reinforcements or fresh dispositions. Thus the whole of the army, inured to the sight of the enemy, becomes warlike and enlightened. If, contrary to this, as is the opinion of many people, light troops are generally increased, employed daily in the minutiae of a campaign, the army is unaccustomed to all exterior duty; it degenerates in the midst of idleness in its camp, and only sees the enemy on the day of battle. When these days of real action are at hand, then these light troops just found for service . . . retreat to suffer the fate of the action . . . to be decided by the troops of the line, who, by their having been continually kept at a distance from such scenes are greatly astonished at the spectacle before them, and flurried to that degree that a third of their execution is, in general, lost.”

For irregular troops, Guibert suggests: a corps

of not more than one thousand to twelve hundred men—two-thirds cavalry and one-third infantry. These were to be employed in harassing and observing the enemy. “. . . At night to be on one spot, in the morning posted on another.” The infantry were to act as a support to the cavalry.

The light infantry were to be quite distinct from the irregular troops; they were to be trained to fight in line as well as in extended order, and their ranks were to be filled with picked soldiers—“chosen veterans.” The officers of light infantry must “not fear to be beaten, when they know that by being so they are of real service to the army.”

Light infantry soldiers should be practised in swimming, running and everything which increases their bodily strength. “In peace” their officers “should teach them those exercises which are found serviceable in war.” Officers should be taught reporting and field fortification. “They should be informed how art, and other illusions in point of ground, make troops appear more or less in number; by fortifying or preparing their eye for these illusions, how to employ their discoveries in an offensive manner against the enemy. Reports to be accurate and not exaggerated; . . . in short, though some of these falsehoods may raise officers to a momentary *éclat*, yet there are still more that have greatly abased them, or that have only given them transient merit, which other occasions of more consequence have entirely obliterated.”

From the above quotations it can scarcely be



said that Guibert was an opponent to light infantry ; in fact he was its very best friend, and, being a man of profound tactical insight, he considered the time had arrived for all troops to be trained not only as heavy infantry, but as light infantry as well.

Guibert had actually seen service with light infantry during the Seven Years' War, and in his book he mentions that de Broglie, in 1760, employed *trained* light infantry in place of an irregular rabble. In 1775, the Duke de Broglie carried out experimental tests of column versus line, and, in 1776, Mesnil-Durand's system was adopted by the French Army. There can be no doubt that this system was as superior to the system of Frederick, as the tactics of the Roman legion were to those of the Grecian phalanx.



## CHAPTER VIII

## The American War of Independence

## THE RE-CREATION OF THE LIGHT COMPANIES

IN 1763, all the light companies in the British Army were reduced; in truth, the tactical system of Frederick the Great offered no room for them. So it happened that the experiences gained during the wars, which had lasted intermittently from 1740 to 1763, were as rapidly lost as learnt. Nevertheless, a change was taking place, for as in France, so also in England, pipeclay, hair-grease and the clockwork manœuvres of the drill square, though they cramped the efforts of the few able soldiers who still sought to carry on the traditions of Wolfe and Amherst, of Howe, Bouquet and Rogers, they could not completely cripple them.

In 1770, a company of light infantry was added to each battalion throughout the line.<sup>1</sup> This addition seems to have been little more than a nominal one, for these light companies were looked upon as penal settlements, and were filled with the worst characters of the battalions. These light companies were so

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<sup>1</sup> "The Annals of the King's Royal Rifle Corps," Vol. I., p. 296. Capt. Lewis Butler.

badly trained that, in 1774, General Howe, by order of King George III., formed a camp at Salisbury for the instruction of seven companies of light infantry in certain manœuvres invented by General Howe.<sup>1</sup> At this time, political mismanagement in our American colonies had produced a condition bordering on rebellion, and Howe, with his American experience, considered that no time should be lost in an attempt to recreate, if only partially, the fine British light infantry which had been raised in America during the Seven Years' War.

This precaution to train a few men in light infantry tactics, so essential to success in America, was not taken a moment too soon, for the following year saw fought the first engagement of the war, the skirmish at Lexington.

#### LEXINGTON AND BUNKER HILL

On April 18th, 1775, certain flank companies, *i.e.*, the light infantry and grenadier companies, were sent from Boston by General Gage to seize some military stores at Concord. On reaching Concord the light infantry occupied the bridges whilst the grenadiers destroyed the stores. The retirement of the British force, on the 19th, from Concord to Lexington proved all but a disaster, and, in spite of the fact that a considerable proportion of the force was light infantry, they were quite unable to cope with the American sharpshooters who, hidden behind houses, walls

<sup>1</sup> For these manœuvres, see Appendix I.

and trees, rained a continuous fire on the British troops. Had these latter been expert light infantry, under an able light infantry commander, such as Bouquet, the rebels would have been routed within a few minutes of opening fire, and the mile after mile of continuous "sniping" would never have taken place. The British force, on this occasion, through faulty training, more so than through faulty leadership, was in almost as precarious a position as the British force under Elphinstone, which years later, in 1841, ignorant of light infantry protective tactics, was destroyed in the Kood Kabul Pass by the sharpshooters of the Afghan mountains. Lexington, the first engagement of this war, carried with it a fair premonition of how it would end. Faulty peace training is worse than no training at all, for whilst troops faultily trained have, before they can learn, to unlearn what they have learnt, untrained troops can learn their lesson without this preliminary unlearning; besides, the instincts of man seldom lead him to such terrible acts of folly and stupidity as unthinking obsolescence.

Two months later, General Gage won Bunker Hill, but the very winning of it was a moral disaster; for though the British troops behaved with magnificent courage, they were at first severely repulsed by the raw American militia, the riflemen of which were told off in groups to pick off the British officers, whose glittering gorgets made excellent aiming marks.

Bunker Hill shows that a mediocre general, in spite of experience, remains mediocre. General

Gage had much experience in the handling of light infantry ; he had witnessed Braddock's disaster at the Monongahela, he had raised a battalion of light infantry, commanded it, and had been present with Abercromby and Howe at Ticonderoga ; he was a contemporary of Bouquet, Rogers and Washington, and yet at Bunker Hill, in place of attacking the Americans as he had seen Beaujeu attack the red-coats of Braddock, he attempted, against expert riflemen, to carry a position by a direct frontal assault unprepared by a skirmishing fire fight. At this battle, the light infantry were employed under General Howe as heavy infantry in place of as skirmishers ; the reason for this may have been that their light infantry training had been so neglected that they were found incompetent to fight in extended order.

It is interesting to note that at this battle, two regiments which, within thirty years, were to be selected as the two first permanent light infantry units in the British Army, fought side by side. These two regiments were the 43rd and 52nd Foot.

#### AMERICAN TACTICS

A little over a year later, in August, 1776, Lord Howe organised his light infantry into battalions ; this, as we have already seen, had been previously done by Amherst and Wolfe.

During this war, the tactical successes gained by the Americans were nearly all in irregular fighting.

Not until well into the war did the English light infantry and light cavalry become equal to the American backwoodsmen and sharpshooters ; but, during the last three years of it, the English had so well adapted themselves to its nature, that they were in no way inferior to their opponents.<sup>1</sup>

The American riflemen well knew the helplessness of the British private without his officer, and it was their custom, during this war, to single out British officers for destruction. We have seen that this happened at Bunker Hill. Another instance was that of the action of Bemis Heights, 1777, in which engagement the American riflemen, perched up in the trees, picked off officer after officer, their rifles being far superior to the British musket.<sup>2</sup> The names of some of the American irregular leaders of the day give a fair idea of the tactics one might expect of them. They were : Marion, "The Swamp Fox" ; Charles Lee, called by Indians "Boiling Water" ; Sumter, "The Game Cock," etc., etc.

It must not be imagined that all cunning and

<sup>1</sup> Roger Stevenson in his "Military Instructions for Officers detached in the Field," p. 2, published 1779, lays down that the American wars proved that the following establishments were most suitable for light troops : A Company : 1 Captain, 1 First and 1 Second Lieutenant, 4 Sergeants, and 96 men, including 4 Corporals and 2 drummers. A troop : 1 Captain, 1 First and 1 Second Lieutenant, 1 Quartermaster, 2 Sergeants, and 48 horsemen, including 4 Corporals and a trumpeter and farrier.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel George Hanger states that he saw an American rifleman fire at him and Colonel Tarleton, and kill an orderly's horse which was standing close by them ; the rifleman was at least 400 yards away. "The Book of the Rifle," p. 30. Hon. T. F. Freemantle. The French sharpshooters did the same during the Peninsula War in Spain.

craft lay on the American side, for as the war progressed such admirable British and German partisan leaders as Emmerich,<sup>1</sup> Simcoe, Tarleton, Ferguson and Ewald carried terror into the American lines. Neither must it be forgotten that the English were such apt pupils in guerilla warfare, that at the close of the war they proved themselves, time after time, adepts in the very tactics which had destroyed so many of them at Lexington and Bunker Hill. At the Battle of Guildford, March 15th, 1781, the British light infantry and the Jägers proved themselves superior to the Americans in bush fighting, and there can be little doubt that if Cornwallis had been handsomely reinforced by the Home Government, he could have carried on the war indefinitely, and with his war-trained troops must have sooner rather than later closed the campaign victoriously. The troops under him had become magnificent fighters, and their leaders, especially those of his light troops, were as skilful as any in the history of the British Army.

#### BRITISH IRREGULARS

“Simcoe and Tarleton are perhaps the best known

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<sup>1</sup> Captain Emmerich was a German partisan; during the Seven Years' War he had fought against the French, and later went to America. When the Revolution broke out he raised a corps of volunteers and was greatly dreaded by the Americans. After the war he returned to Germany, took an active part in the Revolutionary Wars, and completed his adventurous career by attempting to kidnap Jerome Bonaparte for which act he was shot at Cassel in 1809. "The German Soldier in the Wars of the United States," p. 73. J. G. Rosengarten. 2nd Edition.

of the British partisan leaders in this war; the former, though not so dashing, was the sounder officer of the two. His mixed light cavalry and infantry corps, known as the Queen's Rangers, became famous under his leadership, and not only did he employ his men as light cavalry and infantry, but prepared them for their work by a careful system of training "until he could beat the guerilla leaders at their own game."<sup>1</sup>

Tarleton was a mounted infantry leader; his pursuit of Colonel Burford's force in May, 1780, was a memorable feat. He and his men rode one hundred and five miles in fifty-four hours, surprised Burford's column, three hundred and eighty strong, killed one hundred and captured two hundred of them, himself sustaining a loss of three officers and sixteen men killed and wounded. A few months later, Tarleton took one hundred mounted men and sixty infantry and surprised a column of eight hundred strong, under Sumter, whilst it was lying in camp. He killed one hundred and fifty, captured two hundred, two guns, a great quantity of stores, and released one hundred British prisoners who were in the hands of the Americans, at the cost of one officer killed and fifteen men wounded.<sup>2</sup>

The British partisan leaders were, however, not always so fortunate, and the destruction of Ferguson's force at King's Mountain, on October 6th, 1780,

<sup>1</sup> "The British Army, 1783-1802," p. 83. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

<sup>2</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. III., p. 320. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.



by the American backwoodsmen is, from a light infantry point of view, most instructive.

Early in the American War, Major Patrick Ferguson, of Pitfour, raised a corps of British marksmen to meet the American sharpshooters; this corps was armed with a breech-loading flintlock rifle invented by Ferguson himself. In spite of its novelty, it does not seem to have met with the approval of Sir William Howe, then Commander-in-Chief in America, who, when Ferguson was wounded, seized the opportunity to reduce this corps and return the rifles to store. And this, after an action had been fought in which seventeen Rangers had been killed at the cost of two riflemen wounded, which was due to the fact that Ferguson's men could load their rifles whilst lying down on the ground.<sup>1</sup>

At King's Mountain, Ferguson, in command of eleven hundred<sup>2</sup> troops, mostly Militiamen, was surrounded by the backwoodsmen and destroyed by tactics very similar to those which all but annihilated Braddock's army. He was on the march to Charlottetown when he found himself pursued by three thousand backwoodsmen and was forced to take up a defensive position. "These fierce

<sup>1</sup> "Two Scottish Soldiers," p. 121. James Ferguson. Ferguson himself was a dead shot. Tarleton would narrate how Ferguson, creeping through the woods upon his belly, would pick off rebels, and reload his weapon with a celerity which commanded the respect of men trained to compete with the Red Indians in cypress swamps and tangled thickets of "black jacks" or dwarf oaks. "Two Scottish Soldiers," p. 118. James Ferguson.

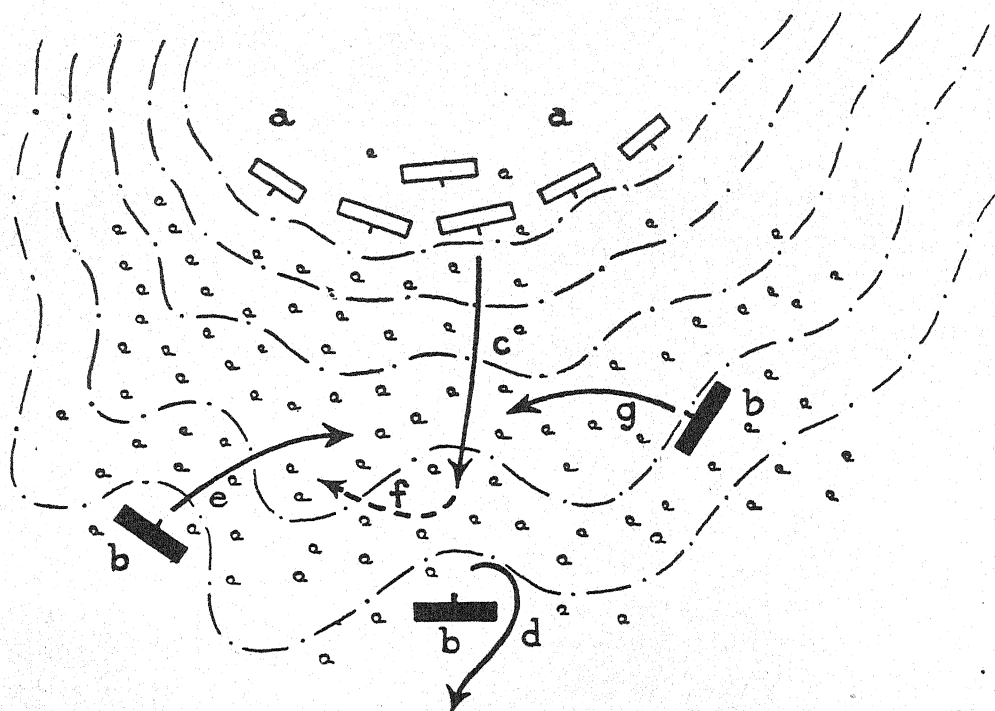
<sup>2</sup> Fortescue in his "History," Vol. III., p. 323, gives this number. Ferguson gives 70 Rangers and 600 Militia.

backwoodsmen were not men to whose hands arms were new, but had been trained from youth to the wildest partisan warfare in bloody conflict with the Indians. . . . Well appointed for their work, moving rapidly, and ready at once to seize any advantage, they were, in such a country, awkward antagonists for the best light troops, and an enemy terrible to raw militia." The backwoodsmen divided about one thousand of their number into three columns—right, centre and left—and attacked in skirmishing order. Ferguson volleyed and charged the central attack. "The British," writes General de Peyster, "depended on their discipline, their manhood, and the bayonet. The Americans took to the trees, shunned anything like personal encounters, and while safe under cover shot down their enemies one by one, just as the Indians of the present day slaughter our troops in the west."

As Ferguson charged the central attack, it slowly fell back keeping its pursuers in check "by a biting fire from behind trees and boulders until a storm of bullets in Ferguson's flank showed that a second division of his enemy was lying in wait for him." As he turned against this second column, the third column, hidden on the opposite flank, attacked him in rear.

Ferguson lost four hundred killed and wounded, and seven hundred lay down their arms after he himself had been killed.<sup>1</sup> The losses of the back-

<sup>1</sup> These are Fortescue's figures. Ferguson gives 51 of the Rangers killed and wounded, and 190 of the Militia killed and wounded.



- a. = Ferguson's Force.
- b. = Backwoodsmen.
- c. = Ferguson's first attack.
- d. = Backwoodsmen's central column retires.
- e. = Backwoodsmen's left column attacks Ferguson's right flank.
- f. = Ferguson forms front to meet it.
- g. = Backwoodsmen's right column attacks Ferguson in rear.

BACKWOODSMEN'S TACTICS AT KING'S MOUNTAIN.



a. =

b. =

c. =

d. = f

e. =

f. =

g. =

woodsmen were eighty-eight. "Their exploit," writes Fortescue, "was as fine an example as can be found of the power of woodcraft, marksmanship and sportsmanship in war." . . . "Ferguson," writes Draper, "trusted too much to the bayonet against an enemy as nimble as the antelope."<sup>1</sup> The truth appears, however, to have been that Ferguson was defeated by force of numbers as much as by marksmanship. His men lacked skill and training; he was compelled to take up a defensive position, and was beaten, as was only to be expected; for, when a force is inferior in numbers, it can only hope to equalise this inferiority by an increased mobility; this the defensive seldom, if ever, permits of. Therefore, for an inferior force to assume the defensive against an active foe is tantamount to committing suicide. Had Bouquet been at King's Mountain, another tale would, in all probability, have been told; for, in his system, his aim was to use a defensive disposition to lure his enemy on, and then, when he had disorganised him, to destroy him by a vigorous attack.

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<sup>1</sup> Condensed from "History of British Army," Vol. III., p. 323. Hon. J. W. Fortescue, and "Two Scottish Soldiers," pp. 89-108. James Ferguson.

## CHAPTER IX

## The Hessians

## THE RAISING OF THE HESSIANS

THE reductions of the British Army, in 1763, left it so weak and disorganised that it was unable adequately to protect the extensive empire which had passed with the Peace of Paris into British hands. The nation did not like the army, and, as we have already seen, the growth of the army had been a surreptitious one, depending on a process of neglecting to disband rather than on raising new units.

When war broke out in 1775, negotiations were opened with the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel with a view of obtaining from him twelve thousand five hundred Hessian mercenaries. These were to be formed into twelve regiments of five companies each, four battalions of grenadiers, two companies of Jägers and some artillery. Brunswick was to raise four thousand, Hesse-Hanau nine hundred, and Waldek, seven hundred and fifty. Frederick the Great, Schiller, Kant, Klopstock and Lessing strongly opposed this raising of German troops,

but their protests were disregarded, and, between 1775-81, no less than thirty thousand were recruited.<sup>1</sup> Most of these men were excellent fighters in spite of the slights they received from both British soldiers and politicians. Even as late as 1804, by which time their services must have been fully known and appreciated, we find so enlightened a man as Robert Jackson writing: "Spoil is the incentive to activity in the German sharpshooter; he may be considered as a long-shot assassin."<sup>2</sup>

The Hessian Jägers and riflemen had for many years past been famous as marksmen and as mercenaries. As far back as 1631, the Landgrave William of Hesse had armed three companies of chasseurs with the rifle. Fourteen years later, the Elector Maximilian of Bavaria formed three regiments of chasseurs; and, in 1674, Frederick William of Prussia had ordered that in every company of infantry there should be several chasseurs and tirailleurs armed with rifles.<sup>3</sup> What eventually became of these picked shots I have been unable to trace; probably they were disbanded, or returned to their companies as musketeers, for in those days

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<sup>1</sup> "The German Soldier in the Wars of the United States," pp. 58-63. J. G. Rosengarten.

<sup>2</sup> "A View of the Formation, Discipline and Economy of Armies," p. 104. Robert Jackson, M.D., *See Appendix II.*

<sup>3</sup> "History and Campaigns of the Rifle Brigade," Vol. I., p. 3. Colonel W. Verner. In the Thirty Years' War, George Margrave of Barden, John Duke of Brandenburg, Christian, Duke of Brunswick, and Ernest, Count of Mansfeld, all raised partisans. "Essai sur la Guerre de Partisans." General Denis Davidoff, 1841.



the rifle was a very slow-loading weapon, and Frederick the Great's fire tactics were based on rapidity rather than on accuracy of fire. The Hessians, of 1775, were not all picked troops, but their Jägers were trained marksmen, and were for the most part recruited from huntsmen and gamekeepers; they were armed with the rifle and carried the bugle horn.

Captain von Heister brought over to America, in August, 1776, the first of the two Jäger companies raised for the British service, the second, under Captain Ewald, arriving in October. These companies were found so useful that, in 1777, they were increased to one thousand and sixty-seven men and organised in five companies, one being mounted. The whole force was placed under the command of Lieut.-Colonel von Wurmb,<sup>1</sup> but companies generally operated independently.<sup>2</sup> The Commanders-in-Chief of the Hessians were Lieut.-General Phillip von Heister, 1777-78, and Lieut.-General Baron von Knyphausen, 1778-82.

As in my book, "Sir John Moore's System of Training," I have stated that Sir John was, in all probability, acquainted with Captain Ewald's work on light infantry tactics, I will deal therefore at some

<sup>1</sup> Following Major Pfister, there appear to have been several officers of the name of Wurmb serving in the Hessians: Major Phillip von Wurmb; Colonel von Wurmb; Capt. von Wurmb, and a Ludwig J. Adolph von Wurmb.

<sup>2</sup> From the "Journal of the Jäger Corps," it appears that the corps numbered 600; 1,067 was probably only its establishment. See also Eelking's "Hulfstruppen, etc."



length with von Ewald's operations, tactics and training, because these resulted in the creation of the most skilful light infantry force raised during the American War.

#### CAPTAIN EWALD

Johann Ewald was born in Cassel on March 30th, 1744. He entered the Hessian Infantry Regiment of Gelsa as a cadet and went through the last campaign of the Seven Years' War. In 1765, he was posted to a Guards Regiment at Cassel, and, in 1770, lost an eye in a duel. In January, 1775, when Colonel Fawcitt arrived from England to negotiate the raising of some twelve thousand five hundred Hessians with the Landgrave, Ewald and his Jägers were selected to form part of this force. He and his men left Germany in May, 1776, under Lieut.-General von Knyphausen. He served through the American War of Independence and was present with Lord Cornwallis when he capitulated at Yorktown, in 1781. In 1784, he returned to Cassel and, in 1788, was promoted to the rank of Lieut.-Colonel in the Danish Service, in which he raised the Holstein Jäger Corps. Later he was promoted to the rank of Lieut.-General and became a "von," and eventually Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Holstein. He served with distinction throughout the Napoleonic Wars, and died near Kiel on June 25th, 1813.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie." 1877.

Captain Ewald was a prolific writer on light infantry training and tactics. In 1785, he wrote "Abhandlung über den Kleinen Krieg" ("A Treatise on Guerilla Warfare"). This book deals largely with light infantry experiences gleaned by him during the American War. It is interesting to note that Frederick the Great spoke very highly of this work. In 1790, "Abhandlung vom Dienst der leichten Truppen" ("A Treatise upon the Duties of Light Troops") appeared. This work was translated into English, in 1803. Also "Gespräche eines Husaren-corporals, eines Jägers und leichten Infanteristen über die Pflichten und den Dienst der leichten Soldaten" ("Conversations of a Hussar Corporal, a Jäger and a Light Infantryman upon the Duties and the Services of Light Troops"). In 1794, "Belehrungen über den Krieg, besonders über den Kleinen Krieg" ("Lessons of the War, especially of Guerilla Warfare"), and several others.<sup>1</sup>

In October, 1776, the Hessians joined General Howe and, on the 23rd of this month, they passed through their baptism of fire, being met by a superior force of American riflemen and driven back. It is probable they would have been severely cut up if it had not been for the timely arrival of Howe's Highlanders. Heister's Jäger company had already been engaged at the battle of Flatbush (August 27th, 1776), and at this engagement the Jägers had learnt the value of long and thin lines of riflemen, well

<sup>1</sup> "A Biography" of General von Ewald was written by his son, Karl von Ewald, and published in 1838.

protected on their flanks, as an offensive formation against solid lines formed on the Prussian model.<sup>1</sup>

As the war progressed, Ewald's little band grew famous for their courage and daring, but it was his superb leadership which crowned their enterprises with success. Seldom can there have been a soldier with greater presence of mind, higher courage and common sense than Johann Ewald.

In 1777, near Raritan Landing, on the Boundbrook Road, Ewald, whilst in a sunken lane, was caught in flank by Colonel Buttlar's light infantry, "whereupon my men, who were usually brave fellows, lost their heads and ran away. Astonished, as you may readily believe, I called after them: 'You may run to the devil, but I'll stay here alone!' At this moment I perceived that one man, Jäger Bauer, had stayed by me. He answered, 'No, you

<sup>1</sup> "The German Soldier in the Wars of the United States," p. 121. J. G. Rosengarten.

"... General von Heister with two German brigades . . . advanced along the Flatbush road, confining himself to a cannonade only until the turning movement began to make itself felt, when he threw his infantry against the heights. Sullivan's (American General) division had already begun to retire from the hill, but his retreating troops were checked by the Light Dragoons and Light Infantry until the Grenadiers and Thirty-third had actually pushed on to within musket-shot of the fortified lines in rear of the hills, and the British were only with difficulty restrained from storming them on the spot. Nearer to the hills another battalion of Light Infantry engaged a force of Americans who were retiring before Heister's attack, and being outnumbered were for a time hard pressed; by being joined by the Guards they continued the struggle, even capturing three guns, until at last the arrival of the Hessians put the Americans to utter rout." "History of the British Army," Vol. III., p. 184. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

shall not stay alone,' and he called after the chasseurs that were making off: 'Boys! Stop! A scoundrel runs away!' After he had shouted out these words a few times they all came back and fought like brave fellows."<sup>1</sup>

Another incident of Ewald's daring and resource is told by Max von Eelking. On one occasion Ewald was left at a village called Mount Holly to keep open the road to Princeton. He had only ninety men with him, and the task was a most difficult one, as the inhabitants were bitterly opposed to the royal cause; further, Ewald knew that arms and ammunition were hidden in the village.

"There were two bridges which made the approach of the enemy easy. Ewald showed his energy and readiness by the way he acted. He covered the bridges and the nearest houses with straw, and then summoning the leading people, told them that the moment there was any outbreak he would set fire to the place. As Mount Holly was a well-to-do village and the shops were full of valuable goods, his precaution was effective, and he remained undisturbed until midnight, then withdrew and joined Donop at Crosswicks. Ewald had no intention to burn the village, but his threat enabled him to hold it quietly."<sup>2</sup>

Ewald's example so influenced his men that their

<sup>1</sup> "These Hessians," p. 179. Edward J. Lowell.

<sup>2</sup> "The German Allied Troops in the North American War of Independence, 1776-83," p. 75. (An abridged translation of Max von Eelking.) J. G. Rosengarten.

deeds of personal gallantry and collective courage soon won the applause of both friend and foe. As early as May, 1778, General Howe "gave especial praise to the Hessian Jägers in his farewell to their Captains Ewald and Wreden." Rosengarten tells us that: "The Hessian Jägers under Ewald . . . won general praise for their heroic courage, and the good example set by them in being foremost in the attack and always ready on the defensive. . . . His reputation for skill and success in handling his own little force was recognised alike by his English allies and his American foes. It consisted, at the outset of the siege of Yorktown, of one hundred and twenty-five Jägers, one hundred grenadiers, one hundred Rangers and thirty dragoons, but at the surrender it was reduced to one-sixth of its original strength."<sup>1</sup>

Ewald was a strong believer in the superiority of the attack over the defence, and to his invariable rule of attacking, when to attack was in any way feasible, may be attributed his numerous successes. "At Fleur de Hundred (Flourde Hundret), March, 1780, Baron Steuben had a force of seven or eight thousand men to bar the way to Portsmouth. Ewald with fifty foot Jägers and three companies of Rangers, drove in the American outpost, and, with Simcoe's cavalry, forced the advance to retreat, and then entered Portsmouth, the chief depot of supplies

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<sup>1</sup> "The German Soldier in the Wars of the United States," p. 82. J. G. Rosengarten. When Tarleton attempted to force his way out of Yorktown in 1781, the German cavalry were under Ewald.

of the American army in the south. The Americans made frequent attempts to recover it, but Ewald was always on his guard, and showed such watchfulness and energy that he not only kept the enemy off, but also captured officers with despatches of great value to Arnold.

"Ewald's rule was always to attack. . . . In his book on 'War' he lays it down as a maxim that whenever the enemy is met at night, he must be attacked at once and followed by a bayonet charge, so that the leader of the advance can ascertain the strength of the enemy, mask his own, and make his plans for his next movement."

On March 19th, one of Ewald's patrols of sixteen Jägers was met near Portsmouth by a column of eight hundred Americans under General de Lafayette. Ewald who was present with the patrol was quite undaunted by this superiority in numbers—fifty to one! He hurried up sixteen more Jägers, and so posted his men that they commanded the narrow top of a dam, which could only be crossed at a time by three men abreast. The Americans three times advanced to the attack, deployed three hundred men against Ewald and his thirty-two, but in vain, for after the third assault Lafayette withdrew his column.<sup>1</sup> With this truly memorable feat of arms I will close the exploits of this dashing and thoughtful light infantry leader.

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<sup>1</sup> "The German Allied Troops in the North American War of Independence," p. 202. J. G. Rosengarten.



## A TREATISE UPON THE DUTIES OF LIGHT TROOPS

After his return from America, we learn from his biography that Ewald assiduously set himself to write various works on light infantry, their training, duties and tactics. In 1790, appeared his admirable "Abhandlung vom Dienst der leichten Truppen," which, in 1803, was translated into English by "A. Maimburg, late Lieut. of the 8th (or King's) Regt. of Infantry." This book was dedicated by permission to His Royal Highness the Duke of York. The English title runs as follows: "A Treatise upon the Duties of Light Troops. Translated from the German of Colonel von Ewald <sup>1</sup> of the Danish Sleswick Jäger Corps, and Knight of the Hessian Order Pour le Merite."

It is impossible, by mere extracts, to do justice to this book, which is a work of genius, as true to-day in the principles it lays down as it was when written, a hundred and thirty-five years ago. The very first sentence of this work shows von Ewald's grasp of essentials. He writes:

"In a military system where it is wished that light troops should be made less necessary, the only way would be to instruct the troops of the line to perform those particular duties. . . . Why should not the troops of the line be taught and practise the same.

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<sup>1</sup> The "h" has been inserted probably for phonetic reasons. The copy in my possession formerly belonged to Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. William Stewart, one of the founders of the Rifle Brigade.

duties, being (as they are) made up of the same sort of men, and clothed and armed alike? The difference of the name alone cannot constitute a different kind of troops.”<sup>1</sup>

The importance of von Ewald's treatise lies in the fact that it is based on hard-won experiences during six years of a most difficult war (1775-81), and not on books and peace-made tactics. Further, that he never commanded more than from a hundred to four hundred men, and gained, therefore, an insight into that method of fighting which may be called “the tactics of the regimental officer.”

To the leader of an army von Ewald may be of little use, but to the regimental officer who has to act on the spur of the moment, in place of pondering over maps and foolscap, we have yet to discover his equal as an instructor, in spite of the fact that his treatise was written over a hundred and thirty years ago.

Colonel von Ewald was a master of stratagems, nevertheless, he not only shows cunning, but common sense. He is bound by no rules, and only asks for skill, discipline and daring, trusting that these three qualities will create their own rules and means as occasion requires. “Demoralise the enemy, then annihilate him,” is the heart and soul of his doctrine. Follow him up, and if he retire, worry him to death if you cannot crush him. To let him escape “is indeed acting in a Christian-like manner,” he writes,

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<sup>1</sup> This suggestion was probably taken from Guibert.



" but it is not doing justice to our King and Country, for the principal duty of a general is to put an end to the war as soon as possible " (p. 232).

To carry out such tactics, ceaseless energy and an unflagging mobility are necessary. Therefore, von Ewald writes that all infantry should be not only infantry of the line, but also light infantry. An army should not only be capable of hugging an enemy like a bear, but of coursing him like a greyhound. Further, he writes: " Experience proves that an army provided with a sufficient body of these troops (light troops), under the command of able and enterprising leaders, enjoys perfect security in its camp, while another, deficient in that respect, is constantly alarmed and teased on every side, besieged in its own camp, and when on the march is perpetually harassed by the enemy " (p. 7). The Light Division, which during the Peninsula War was never once surprised, strikingly corroborates von Ewald's experience.

Von Ewald had not only served in light corps, but had helped to raise and recruit them, and his remarks on the type of officer and men required must have been of particular interest to Sir John Moore, Lieut.-Colonel MacKenzie and others.

As regards the non-commissioned officers, they should be young, active, brave, and trustworthy, " and none of those old, worn-out, ill-behaved and ill-natured fellows, as is in general the case ; because (when a light corps is in process of being formed) the

regiments of the line seize such opportunities to get rid of their worst men" (p. 10).

Recruits should be carefully selected, and should be picked out for their physical qualities, and not to swell the ranks. They should not be under five feet four inches in height, and in no case over thirty years old. Old soldiers should not be sought after. They perceive dangers quicker than the young. Concerning his first experience in the American War (October 26th, 1776), he writes :

" My old soldiers were the first who perceived our situation, and I was forsaken by many of them, but the young lads stood by me in the innocence of their hearts, and to them I owed the preservation of myself and my party " (p. 12).

Von Ewald insists upon the discipline of all ranks as an essential of success. " There is nothing impossible ! " he writes ; " give your orders, support them with firmness, and you will see every obstacle vanish " (p. 35). As to punishments, he believed in those of a moral rather than of a physical type. The best method of dealing with hardened sinners is : " To strip them naked to the shirt, shave their heads, and turn them out in the most shameful manner before the front of the whole corps ; punishments of this sort make a deeper impression than the severest corporal ones " (p. 13).

But true discipline, he maintains, is not based on punishment, but on skill, which creates self-reliance : " The soldier himself feels a certain confidence and pride from the consciousness of his skill," and is,

therefore, "prepared for everything." This is, indeed, the true basis of all discipline.

The spirit of von Ewald's tactics is the offensive, and though he deals lengthily with protective services which, in his day, formed such an important part of the duties of the light troops, he never forgets that to fight means to hit. Do not waste your time evolving plans of operations in your head, make your dispositions immediately, and charge the enemy resolutely, even if he be superior: "For it is a general rule in war that he who begins the attack has already half the victory, and fortune generally favours the resolute and brave, and very often, indeed, the rash" (p. 123). And then he adds a remark which is the essence of the light infantry fight: "The riflemen must endeavour by their destructive fire to annoy and weaken the enemy on all sides from afar" (p. 124). That is, they must demoralise so as to render the assault possible.

Never lose sight of your principal object; do not act contrary to your orders; do not be led astray by secondary issues; go straight for the main issue, and do not rest until you have conquered it (p. 123). But do not be pedantic and small-minded; if in carrying out an order you find that circumstances have changed since it was given you, disobey it resolutely, if your wits tell you you are doing right, but, if you do so, take care to acquaint the issuer of the order with what you have done. Fear nothing (p. 142).

"If you be frequently alarmed by the enemy,

do not suffer it quietly, but alarm him still more frequently, in order to keep him in awe, and tire him out " (p. 146).

"Should you receive certain intelligence that the enemy intend a surprise upon your post, and be also assured of the road he will take, march at the same time by another road upon his own post, carry off all he may have left in it, observing to follow, on your return, the road by which the enemy went, and which, according to the principles of the art of war, he will not certainly take on his return " (p. 159).

"Whatever is unexpected strikes the mind with fear, and when you hazard most, most is to be gained." ". . . The word surprisal, properly speaking, should not be known in war. . . . For to say an officer has been surprised, is the same as saying he has lost by his own negligence, ignorance, or obstinacy, the honour, liberty or lives of himself and many men who were entrusted to him " (p. 190).

If surrounded or in a tight corner, listen to no representation ; persevere in your resolution, for : "A glorious death is certainly preferable to life at the price of ever so good a capitulation " (p. 179). Recollect always the old saying, "He who never runs, can never be pursued " (p. 265).

From the offensive I will now turn to the protective services of light infantry, and here again von Ewald is just as decisive. He is neither blinded by the attack nor is he enthralled by the defence ;

he sees all things clearly and in proportion. "Never think yourself fully secure" (p. 121), he writes. He tells a good story of how a Spanish officer, hearing that a French officer and forty cavalry would enter a certain hollow way during the night-time, lay in wait for them. The French blundered into the trap and were cut down. The Spanish officer gave the French officer two cuts with his sabre, with this advice: "Learn your duty better for the future, and before you march your men through a country, examine it" (p. 54). Leave no cover unsearched either on the move or when at rest. When halted at once cover yourself with outposts, and post single sentries by day and double by night (p. 169). Be always vigilant and especially so on rough windy nights, and make use of them to surprise the enemy's posts.

"A thick mist will favour your approach; and when hard rain and high wind drive in the faces of the sentries, they put down their heads, forget themselves often, and turn their backs to the rain and wind, by which you may easily steal to them, and stab them unawares. . . . In such weather you cannot visit your own posts too often." If you surprise the enemy's outposts, rush upon them, "and endeavour to enter his camp at the same time with him" (p. 197).

Outpost work does not only consist in posting sentries, but also in sending out frequently patrols "towards the enemy in order to procure timely intelligence of his motions and approach" (p. 144).

These patrols should move out at uncertain hours and especially before daybreak (p. 146). Further, in intersected country, von Ewald lays down that in advance of the outpost line small standing posts should be placed, along likely avenues of approach, whose duty it is to alarm the outposts themselves if an enemy approaches. He adds: "Supposing that it should occasion the loss of a man or two; so inconsiderable a loss is not adequate to the immense advantage which would result from this measure; and if the Jägers be properly trained, it will seldom happen" (p. 145).

Night work receives very careful consideration by von Ewald; he sees in it great possibilities for active, well-led troops. He insists absolutely on the offensive being assumed should the enemy be met unawares (p. 50). On a night march the advanced guard should be quite near, and preceded by an officer on foot some fifty paces ahead: "Everyone should march in the greatest silence, smoke no tobacco, and all those who are subject to coughs and colds must be left behind on such occasion. No horse must be taken that is accustomed to neigh" (p. 201). Bayonets alone should be relied on, and the rifles of the advanced guard should not even be loaded (p. 208): If a panic occurs, whether by day or night, do not cry "Halt! Stand!" but endeavour to reach the first fugitives and form them up, "which will be easily done as they see behind them many more for protection" (p. 266).

The whole of Colonel von Ewald's book is full

of useful hints, stratagems and experiences. "If your men go marauding," he writes, "catch them and thrash them in front of the inhabitants, by which you recommend yourself . . . and gain the attachment of the whole country" (p. 237). "If you desire to obtain food from the inhabitants, seize the most wealthy individuals and threaten to hang them unless bread and meat are at once forthcoming" (p. 122). "But should you wish to discover the conditions of the roads, do not question the rich inhabitants, "for they will always represent the roads worse than they really are, in order to prevent a visit into their country" (p. 186).



## CHAPTER X

## The Tactical Lessons of the American War

## THE IGNORANCE OF POLITICIAN AND SOLDIER

THE war having terminated disastrously in 1781, the first military labour which occupied the energies of the government at home was not to examine the tactical lessons of the war in order to improve the army, the faulty training of which had rendered this war calamitous, but to reduce the army in order to increase votes and save expense. This began early in 1783.

If, before the outbreak of the war, the condition of the army had been bad, a few years after its close it was deplorable, and under the military *régime* of Pitt the army became, as we shall see, a greater danger to the nation than to her enemies.

The ignorance of the British corps of officers of 1775 was of a Stygian density, for a few only knew the rudiments of tactics and the history of war. Ewald, in Vol. II. of his "*Belehrungen, etc.*," informs us: "I was sometimes astonished when American baggage fell into our hands . . . to see how every wretched knapsack, in which were only a few

shirts and a pair of torn breeches, would be filled up with military works such as 'The Instructions of the King of Prussia to his Generals,' 'Thielkes' Field Engineer,' the partisans Jenny and Grand-maison. . . . This was a true indication that the officers of this army studied the art of war while in camp, which was not the case with the opponents of the Americans, whose portmanteaux was rather filled with bags of hair powder, boxes of sweet-smelling pomatum, cards (instead of maps), and then often, on top of all, novels or stage plays."

The Americans began their rebellion on the strength afforded them by many excellent riflemen, hunters by occupation, backwoodsmen, and a few battalions of local militia. The majority of the colonists eventually took up arms, and a deadly guerilla war was waged in which drill-square trained officers and men, lacking war experience and the knowledge of history, were worse than useless.

The American guerilla was crafty and fearful, courageous and timid, elated and despondent, seldom balanced and, therefore, easily subjected to panics. The old tactics of Bouquet, which had proved so successful against savage or irregular, were replaced by the tactics of Gage, Howe and Cornwallis, which were based on the line formations of Frederick the Great, and which were the very worst imaginable formations ever adopted in the history of war against nimble and skilful riflemen.

The Americans in this war, as Quartermaster von Minnigerode tells us, "lie singly behind trees,

bushes, stone walls and rocks, shoot at long range and with certainty, and run away very fast as soon as they have fired. The Germans cannot shoot a third so far, and can still less catch them running." Robert Jackson makes a similar observation. He writes: "They exercised the firelock with effect while they were under cover; they retired when the enemy approached near, that is, they split and squandered, according to the cant phrase, to rally at an assigned point in the rear." Against such foes, close, compact and ridged formations, were useless; they offered the minimum of mobility with the maximum target surface. To attack agile skirmishers by means of a shoulder-to-shoulder formation, is like attacking a swarm of angry wasps with a sledgehammer. It is preposterous. Though some of the higher British leaders do not seem to have grasped this until well into the war, many of their subordinates did, with the result that as the war proceeded, not only was it realised that skirmishers must be destroyed by skirmishers, but that, when attacking any foe not obsessed by some tactical dogma, such as the dogma of close order, a general loosening of the ranks tended towards lessening casualties and, consequently, gaining victories.

#### TACTICAL CHANGES

Nearly every modern war has found an army well drilled and has left it well trained, and the American War of Independence proved no exception to this

rule. Nearly every war of the eighteenth century opened with close order battles and ended by the heavy infantry having, so to speak, in the fever of war sweated forth, in spite of themselves, a cloud of light infantry, which unfortunately evaporated directly the war fever abated. During the War of the Spanish Succession, we find Croats and Tyrolese ; during the War of the Austrian Succession, Pandours and Grassins ; during the Seven Years' War, Jägers and Chasseurs in Europe, and in America, Light Infantry and Rangers ; and now during the American War of Independence, Riflemen and Sharpshooters, each springing up as a necessity of war, and then disappearing once peace has been declared to give place to the unthinking drilled infantry of the line. Drill, drill, drill, soul-killing, heart-destroying, body-racking drill.

In 1783, drill reasserted its sway, but six years of guerilla warfare had sadly shaken its hitherto unshakable reputation. The drill of Prussia was re-established, but it was not quite the same drill as it had been in 1775 ; it was quicker, looser, not so beautiful, still deadening, but not quite so numbing as of yore.

The rifle companies, which had sprung up in every battalion, were abolished ; but abolition of formation and organisation could not carry with it the obliteration of the fact that with a rifle a soldier could hit a man four hundred yards away, whilst with an ordinary firelock it was scarcely possible to hit at that range a division of cavalry in mass.

Abroad, the war was being studied. In Germany, Colonel von Ewald was writing books in which the deeds of the light infantry, British and German, were set forth in all their attractiveness. Frederick the Great was at last bringing himself to admit that light troops—infantry, as well as cavalry—were a necessity. Besides the works of von Ewald, General von Ochs, a Hessian, wrote with emphasis on the useful lessons he had learnt from the American riflemen, and his work was finally adopted in a modified form by Frederick the Great, who, in the last years of his reign, organised three light infantry regiments, and secured for their training the services of many Hessian, Brunswick and Anspach officers who had seen service in America. His successor increased this force, in 1787, to twenty battalions of Fusiliers,<sup>1</sup> and, in 1788-89, he published their Regulations, largely drawn from the experiences of the American skirmishers.

In France, I have not been able to trace any immediate effect of the American tactics on the training of the French soldier. "The Rules and Regulations" of the French Army, published in 1791, shows no sign of an unbending ; yet a time was rapidly approaching when men like Lafayette were

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<sup>1</sup> "Tactics" (Infantry), Vol. I., Colonel Balck, p. 21, gives number of Fusilier battalions as 24.

"The American War was of infinite use to the German soldiers. Ten years later they applied the lessons learned there in defending their own country, and the best officers and the best soldiers in the war with France were those who had served in America," such as Domberg, Langen, York and Gneisenau.

to teach the ill-trained armies of the Revolution the tactics of the American sharpshooter.

In England, the only direct military effect of the war was to weaken, in place of strengthen, the army. Inwardly, however, a revolution was slowly taking place which spelt destruction to the old *régime*. By 1781, the British soldier had lost the solidity and precision which had distinguished him at Fontenoy and Minden. Formations were looser and the depth of ranks was now two files in place of three.

" . . . British officers returned from America with a fixed idea that the firearm was now all in all, that the shock of the bayonet was so rare as to be practically obsolete, and that the greater the frontage of fire that could be developed the better." <sup>1</sup> The officers who had remained in England during the war objected to such unheard of soldiership, and the chief amongst these was Colonel David Dundas, of whom later on we shall hear more.

#### ACTION ON THE VIGNIE, 1778

The American War had seen regulars fighting irregulars, first by means of regular tactics, that is, the tactics of the day ; secondly, by irregular tactics, the tactics of improvisation. It may be supposed, therefore, that the military school at home had reason on its side, as the successes the regulars had gained, by means of their irregular tactics, were

<sup>1</sup> " History of the British Army," Vol. III., p. 529. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.



against irregulars and not against regular soldiers. This was, however, not the case, whatever reason might dictate, for, in 1778, at St. Lucia, unreasoning experience showed how a British force, out-numbered by four to one, met a force trained in the School of Frederick, and made "absolute havoc of it."

From a light infantry point of view, the battle which took place on this occasion is of particular interest, and as it is fully dealt with by Fortescue<sup>1</sup> I will only examine such details as more particularly refers to the light infantry attack.

General Medows commanded the British force. He was an officer of the new school, that is the humane school, as we shall shortly see.

The light infantry "advancing in skirmishing order, and keeping themselves always under cover . . . maintained at close range a most destructive fire upon the heavy French columns. If the French attempted to extend, they threatened a charge with the bayonet; when the French closed up, they were themselves already extended and pouring in a galling fire; when the French advanced with solidity and determination, they retired as if beaten, and disappeared, but only to renew their fire, invisible themselves, from every direction."

The French left four hundred dead on the field, and acknowledged a loss of twelve hundred in wounded. The English casualties were thirteen killed and one hundred and fifty-eight wounded.

Medows was a leader worthy of his brave men. He

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. III., p. 265.



was wounded early in the fight, but never for a moment did he leave the field, "and when the action was over he visited every wounded officer and man before he would receive the surgeon's attention himself." It was men like Medows, who, within the next twenty-five years, were going to reform the British Army and render it invincible.

Fortescue writes :

"The action on the Vignie (St. Lucia, 1778) is also notable in itself, being the first example of the employment of the new British tactics, learned in America, against the old system favoured in Europe. The French were puzzled beyond measure by the work of the British light infantry. They had chasseurs of their own, but these were never supposed to make any serious resistance, whereas five companies of British chasseurs had made havoc of two battalions which out-numbered them by four to one, not only by defence but by counter-attack. . . . Every officer and man of this force knew what to do, and did it ; whereas the French, though they fought bravely enough, were absolutely at a loss. In fact, the behaviour of Medows' battalion was exactly that of the famous Light Division in its palmiest days ; thus confirming the forgotten fact that Moore's reforms in tactics were built on the experience of America." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The British Army, 1783-1802," pp. 127-131. The Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

It was not until 1806, twenty-eight years after this action, that we see the British light infantry at the battle of Maida repeating, with a glamour of their old glory, the American tactics ; and twenty years of the twenty-eight intervening were certainly the most dismal in the annals of the British Army. When politicians attempt to lead armies, then indeed is the old saying true, "*Facilis est descensus Averni !*"

## CHAPTER XI

## The Light Infantry of the French Revolution

## THE NATIONAL HORDES

ONE of the immediate causes of the outbreak of the Revolution in France was the destruction of the old Royal Army and its replacement by the Garde Nationale. The Bastille fallen and the Swiss Guard slaughtered, saw the people freed from the last restraining power which could maintain peace and order.

The Austrian Army, of this date, was outwardly a very formidable military machine, superbly drilled, well clad and fed, equal to any military machine constructed for linear tactics, but quite unequal to the task it had set itself to perform, namely, the castigation of the *sans-culottes* of France.

The Revolution had, by 1792, become a religion ; men no longer acted or thought like rational beings but like bang intoxicated fanatics, and once Austria had thrown down the gauntlet of war, recruits rushed to the tricolour of France demanding immediate enlistment. These recruits were not soldiers, they had never been drilled, they knew nothing of war,

yet, sustained by a fierce enthusiasm, with a cockade in their hats and a musket on their shoulder, they eventually proved themselves more than a match for the best drilled troops in Europe. Discipline and training being at a discount, their place was taken by activity and mobility; the Convention seeing this, indeed it could see nothing else, raised the light troops in France to eighty thousand in number.

In Flanders, these first armies of the Revolution were ignominiously routed, more through the phantoms raised by their own fears than by the tactics of their enemies. As skirmishers, unsupported by any nucleus of regular troops, they possessed no stamina, no power of co-operation, a wild comradeship, but no confidence. The Austrians, having been beaten by the solid lines of Prussia, had to a great extent abandoned the art of skirmishing. At this time, or certainly by 1796, they possessed fifteen battalions of well-trained Jägers, but their contempt for the French was such that they expected to sweep over France at the goose-step in line of battalions in close order! They failed, however, to reckon with the instincts of the nation whose territories they now invaded; they lacked insight into human nature and, lacking it, their failure was fore-ordained.

The French, writes Robert Jackson, "from quick perception, mental activity, and celerity in movement, are excellently fitted by Nature for the practice of partisan war. . . . A swarm of sharpshooters, sent out in every direction, masks the movement of the advancing force. . . . This mode of warfare belongs

to a new people acting by common sense and the reality of things, rather than by precedent and pomp of appearance. . . . European sovereigns were often embarrassed, in the early part of the war, by the Proteus-like mutability and energy of the Republican irregulars who fell back upon the reserve, which consisted of tried men, analogous in character to the *triarii* of the Roman armies.”<sup>1</sup>

This reserve, which Jackson mentions, was gradually formed from war-trained men as the campaigns proceeded, the younger and untrained soldiers preceding the small columns of veterans, in lines of skirmishers; in fact, the system of Mesnil-Durand was little by little taking form. The French light infantry forged ahead, opened a teasing, demoralising fire along the whole front of the enemy's line, held him in position, discovered his weak places, and acted as a shield behind which the battalion columns manoeuvred, and, once in position, swept through their own skirmishers to break the enemy's line.

#### GENERAL BONAPARTE'S TACTICS

By degrees the column began to realise its power for shock once the skirmishers had sufficiently demoralised the enemy's ranks. Meanwhile the line formation was undergoing a further change. Being the primary formation for fire, it could in no way be replaced by scattered swarms of skirmishers. By

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<sup>1</sup> “A view of the Formation Discipline and Economy of Armies,” pp. 142-48. Robert Jackson.

degrees the Revolutionary armies began, more or less intuitively, to realise this, for occasionally we find their skirmishers closing in on one another as they neared their enemy, and so forming scattered groups—fractions of a line—in order to pour in a hail of shot at close range and prepare the way for the charge of the columns behind them. Bonaparte seems to have been one of the first to grasp the tactics of skirmishers and heavy infantry, line and column combined, and to his skilful employment of this combination may be attributed many of his early successes. After Eylau and Friedland he partially abandoned the skirmishing fight, and, like Frederick, trusted to his artillery to produce the necessary demoralisation in the enemy's ranks.

When Bonaparte was appointed to the command of the Army of Italy, he found but very little artillery at his disposal ; he had, therefore, to depend on his skirmishers to carry out the act of demoralisation. He supported their attack by artillery fire, and so as not to impair the moral of the force destined to carry out the act of decision, he kept his reserve well out of the zone of effective fire. The successive employment of forces, as formerly made use of in the Roman legion, we here see reproduced, and from now on this system becomes the base of all offensive operations.

Whilst on the Rhine, the light infantry of Moreau, Marceau and Jourdan were carrying out skirmishing battles and were not adequately supporting their attacks or combining their various forces ; Bonaparte, in Italy, was teaching Europe the lessons



of the future, and was putting into full operation the tactics of Mesnil-Durand.

At Lonato and Castiglione, 1796, Bonaparte made use of battalion columns at deploying intervals covered by skirmishers. At Rivoli, 1797, again the same tactics won him the day. At the Tagliamento, 1797, he made use of the demi-brigade, and for the first time the new system is seen in its entirety on the field of battle. The two divisions of the French Army having formed their battalions of grenadiers, "ranged themselves in order of battle, each with a demi-brigade of light infantry in their front, supported by two battalions of grenadiers, and flanked by the cavalry, the light infantry manœuvring as riflemen."

"General Dammaritin on the left, and General Lespinasse on the right, made their artillery advance, when a brisk cannonade commenced, upon which Bonaparte gave orders for every demi-brigade to file off in close column on the wings of their second, first, and third battalions. General Dupont, at the head of the twenty-seventh light infantry, threw himself into the river and presently gained the opposite bank, being supported by General Bon with the grenadiers of Guieux's division. General Murat made the same movement on the right, and was in like manner supported by the grenadiers of Bernadotte's division. The whole line put itself in motion, each demi-brigade *en echelons* with squadrons of cavalry placed at intervals in the rear. The Imperial cavalry attempted several times to charge the French infantry,



but without success ; the river was crossed, and the enemy routed in every direction." <sup>1</sup>

At Marengo, 1800, much the same system was employed. At Austerlitz, 1805, Napoleon's formation was that of one regiment of two battalions deployed, and one regiment of two battalions on the flanks. At Jena, 1806, the Napoleonic column met the line of Frederick and cost the Prussians one of the most decisive defeats in history.

After Austerlitz the French Army consisted of one hundred demi-brigades of infantry and thirty demi-brigades of light infantry. Napoleon's *voltigeurs* were in every respect true light infantry. At the end of the Napoleonic wars the proportion of light troops to heavy in the European armies was as follows : Russia, one-quarter ; France, one-third ; Prussia, five-ninths ; Denmark, one-tenth ; and Sweden, one-sixth. <sup>2</sup>

#### GENERAL DUHESME'S PRINCIPLES

Duhesme, <sup>3</sup> in his "Essay on Light Infantry," lays

<sup>1</sup> " Campaign of General Bonaparte in Italy 1796-7," p. 324. By a General Officer. Translated from the French by T. E. Ritchie, 1799.

<sup>2</sup> " Staff College Essays," p. 60. Lieut. Evelyn Baring.

<sup>3</sup> General Duhesme was born at Bourgneuf in 1766. In 1791, he raised and equipped 200 light infantry for the war against Austria. In 1815, Napoleon appointed him general of the two divisions of the Young Guard, and at Waterloo, at the head of one of these divisions, he was mortally wounded. Napoleon wrote of him in his "Memoirs": "Soldat intrépide et général consommé, ferm et inébranlable dans la bonne comme dans la mauvaise fortune."

down very clearly the principles of the light infantry combat of his day.

A division of eight battalions was formed in line, numbered, one to eight, from right to left. The advance being ordered, battalion columns were formed and the advance was made chequerwise, the left battalions forming the first line and the right the second. As the first line moved off, it threw out its skirmishers in front of it ; these worked in company swarms and not in line, each swarm protecting the head of its own battalion column and keeping touch with the swarms on its right and left ; each swarm also maintained as a support some ten to fifteen men in close order ; these supports marched behind the swarms as a nucleus to rally on, should the skirmishers be attacked by cavalry. The voltigeurs of the second line, in place of marching at the head of their line, advanced into the intervals between the battalion columns of the first line, so that if the voltiguers of the first line could not make headway, those of the second line could rapidly support them. The captains of the light companies remained with their supports and kept the buglers by them whilst the subalterns led the attacking swarms.

Behind the skirmishing fight the battalions continued their advance as rapidly as circumstances permitted, their chief duty being to maintain direction. Once demoralisation seized upon the enemy, the battalions in column would push on with all speed and charge their demoralised foe. As the first line of columns approached, the skirmishers

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slowed down their advance and fell back into the intervals fighting, the second line pushing forward to fill the gaps from the rear. If the first line of columns was checked, the second line supported it ; if the first line was successful, the second line pursued ; if the first line was repulsed the second covered its retirement.

Fire action was almost entirely independent, and, therefore, aimed, a broadside being only occasionally fired by the leading double company of the battalion columns, just prior to the charge, more to produce panic and consternation than to kill. Duhesme calculated that the eight hundred light infantry covering a division could fire two thousand four hundred shots a minute, and setting down the duration of the fire fight at ten minutes, this meant that twenty-four thousand shots would be fired prior to the assault. " If one tenth of these hit," he writes, " no less than two thousand four hundred casualties will occur in a line of eight to ten thousand men. . . . The fire of the enemy's line will not have caused a similar loss on account of the narrow fronts of the columns and the scattered formation of the skirmishers."

Duhesme states that the best system is that which meets the most usual occurrences. " I have behind me," he writes, " much experience, and I dare to hope that officers who have seen service, even if they differ over detail, will adopt the principle of this method of fighting."

And further on :

"It is thus that good light infantry, by harassing a retiring enemy, by hindering and impeding his march by every kind of means, will deliver him over to the shock of the victorious columns, and so prepare his entire destruction! Thus a well-instructed and well-formed light infantry begins the attack, is an important factor in its decision, and contributes greatly to the completion of victory! Almost totally ignored in the days of Louis XIV., and during the revival of the military arts in the reign of Louis XV. only employed in guerilla warfare, this arm has resumed in this century the position it held in the tactics of the ancients, in taking a glorious part, not only in those battles which are fought in rugged and woody country, but as well in those which are fought upon the most open of plains."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Essay Historique sur l'Infanterie Légère," pp. 298-315. Le Comte Duhesme. Third Edition. Originally written in 1803.

## CHAPTER XII

## The British Army Under Political Control

## PITT'S MILITARY IGNORANCE

WHEN, on the continent of Europe, men of education and profession, as well as historians and philosophers, were looking with anxiety upon the changing times,<sup>1</sup> and when the Rights of Man, and, consequently, the destruction of liberty, were permeating the lowest strata of society, the politicians of England, having partially disbanded their war-trained army, set to work, in a manner which for skilfulness and thoroughness must command the admiration of all true iconoclasts, to destroy the remainder of this force by rendering it unamenable to discipline, by corrupting its corps of officers and by filling its ranks with the clearings of the gaols—pickpockets, coiners, thieves and vagabonds.

If there ever has been an object lesson of the danger of entrusting an army to civil control, this lesson can

<sup>1</sup> In 1789, the Empress Catharine said to Ségur: "Croyez moi, une guerre seule peut changer la direction des esprits en France, les réunir, donner un but plus utile aux passions et réveiller le vrai patriotisme." "Ségur" III., 242. There were many others besides the clear-sighted Catharine who thought likewise.



be read in the history of the British Army between the years 1784 and 1798.

In 1784, General Conway retired from the post of Commander-in-Chief of the army, and, for political reasons, no other officer was appointed in his place. From this time on the decadence was rapid, and, in 1794, we find the condition of the army truly deplorable.

"Hard drinking," writes Fortescue, "which was the fashion then in all classes from highest to lowest, was, of course, sedulously cultivated by these aspirants to the rank of gentlemen ; and it was no uncommon thing for regiments to start on the march under charge of the Adjutant and Sergeant-Major only, while the officers stayed behind, to come galloping up several hours later, full of wine, careless where they rode, careless of the confusion into which they threw the columns, careless of everything but the place appointed for the end of the march, if by chance they were sober enough to have remembered it. These evils, too, were extremely difficult to check, for in 1794, as in 1744, political interest rather than meritorious service was the road to promotion. While the shameful traffic of the army-brokers<sup>1</sup> and the

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Dupin in his "View of the History and Actual State of the Military Force of Great Britain," 1820, writes :

In 1804 "who could believe that a youth under sixteen years of age, to whom the civil law denies the right of purchasing, or disposing of the least real estate, can, for ever, alienate the property of his own person ? A child may sell himself, or rather be sold by his parents, for life, and the difference between the price of enlistment for limited or unlimited service is only one guinea ! When the parents or tutors of a youth under sixteen years of age induce him to enlist for life they receive a reward of two guineas . . . !"

raising of endless new regiments continued, every officer who could command money or interest was sure of obtaining advancement at home without the knowledge of his chief in the field, and had, therefore, not only no encouragement to do his duty, but an actual reason for avoiding it. Thus the men were very imperfectly disciplined; there were no efficient company officers to look after them; no efficient Colonels to look after the company officers; no Generals to look after the Colonels." <sup>1</sup>

As no proper system of recruiting or registration existed, the men, having been disbanded, were not so easily obtained when once again they were required. In spite of the shortage of supply, the demand steadily increased, and every fraudulent measure imaginable was legalised in order to obtain men. <sup>2</sup> In this respect the administration of William Pitt entirely eclipses all efforts of maladministration of the army by any civilian prior to his day; further it has never been equalled by any since, and this is indeed saying much.

In 1794, to obtain recruits, Pitt introduced the rascally system of raising men for rank; in other words, officers could buy their promotion not merely

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. IV., p. 297. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

<sup>2</sup> The British Army, in 1792, consisted of 32,000 men in the British Isles and a similar force in the East Indies maintained by the East India Company; besides these forces there were thirty-six regiments of yeomanry. In 1796, it consisted of 206,000 men, including 42,000 militia. More than half of this force, however, was required for service in the colonies. "History of Europe," Vol. III., p. 105. Sir Archibald Alison.

by paying for it, but by buying men as recruits for the army, certain standards being set down according to the rank to be bought. The result was that "undesirable characters, such as keepers of gambling-houses, contrived to buy for their sons the command of regiments, and mere children were exalted in the course of a few weeks to the dignity of field-officers. One proud parent, indeed, requested leave of absence for one of these infant Lieutenant-Colonels on the ground that he was not yet fit to be taken from school."<sup>1</sup>

Ranks were filled by the press-gangs; "recruiting became a mere matter of gambling; the price of men rose to thirty pounds a head. . . . Pitt's behaviour showed both callousness and ignorance."<sup>2</sup>

Once the men had been captured, there existed no system of instruction, except the Principles of Dundas,

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. IV., p. 213. Hon. J. W. Fortescue. Alison in his "History of Europe," Vol. III., p. 106, writes: "To such a length was this system carried, that it was not unusual for infants to obtain commissions in the cradle, and draw pay regularly for sixteen years before they joined their corps. The well-known story in Scotland when a loud noise was heard in the nursery, '*Oh, it's only the Major roaring for his parritch!*' shows how common this abuse had become in families of influence."

Charles Napier, in a letter to his mother, written on December 26th 1803, pens a striking picture of the decrepit old general of his day. ". . . Under a long feather and cocked hat, trembling, though supported by stiff Hessian boots, gold-headed cane and long sword, I see the wizened face of a general grinning over the parapet of a fine frill, and telling extraordinary lies, while his claret, if he can afford claret, is going down the throats of his wondering or quizzing aides-de-camp."

<sup>2</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. IV., p. 214 Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

which were so complex that they required years and years of teaching. The officers took little or no interest in their profession, the money they had spent in buying men was so much capital sunk, the interest of which was their pay. They had no stake in the army as a military force ; to them it was solely a commercial concern, and a means of gaining the veneer of aristocratic distinction as well as a gaudy uniform to attract the female eye.

When no more recruits were forthcoming, Pitt, in place of turning those he had collected from a rabble of discontented ruffians into some semblance of a fighting-force, resorted to hiring mercenaries. He left the British soldier to starve, and paid £36,000 to the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel for twelve thousand Hessians at call. "It was literally true," writes Fortescue, "that by the end of 1794 the old British army had been destroyed, both officers and men. . . . It was not Austerlitz that killed Pitt," but "the burden of his incapacity for war."<sup>1</sup>

In ~~Ireland~~ matters reached a climax; in 1798, when Abercromby published his famous "General Order" of February 26 :

"The very disgraceful frequency of courts-martial and the many complaints of irregularities in the conduct of the troops in the kingdom have, too, unfortunately proved the army to be in a state of licentiousness which must render it formidable to every one but the enemy."

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<sup>1</sup> "The British Army, 1783-1802," pp. 30 and 54. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

In the same year Cornwallis disbanded the Perthshire Fencibles in Ireland on account of the insubordination of its officers.

This appalling want of discipline throughout the British Army was due, as Fortescue points out, to one main fact, and only one: "The encroachments of the civil head of the War Office upon the province of the Commander-in-Chief."<sup>1</sup>

#### THE DUKE OF YORK

In 1795, most fortunately for the army, the personality of the Duke of York began to assert itself. Chiefly remembered on account of the disastrous Walcheren Expedition, it is customary, for those who do not read history, to scoff at him; and many have passed by his statue and wondered why it was erected and what entitled him to a column as towering as that of Lord Nelson. What he did was this: By introducing reforms into an army, reduced to a mob of armed men by political intrigue and civilian mismanagement, he rendered it possible, a few years later, for Wellington to win a score of victories in the Peninsula of Spain, and ultimately, with the aid of Blücher, to defeat Napoleon at Waterloo. Nelson, with a fine navy, destroyed a numerically superior fleet. The Duke of York recreated, from a criminal rabble,

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. IV., p. 878. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

supported by corrupt politicians, an unconquerable army.<sup>2</sup> With justice, both deserve the stones upon which their effigies are raised.

It was not long before the Duke of York's influence was felt. We find the question of educating the officer brought to the fore, and, in March 1799, a military school was opened for the instruction of Staff Officers at High Wycombe, under the guidance of M. de Jarry, a professor from the Military School of Berlin. In after years this school became known as the Staff College. In 1802, the Royal Military College was opened at Great Marlow.

The very incompetence and corruption of the politicians was producing a back-wash of indignation in the mind of all upright men; and the new school of military discipline, the school of Wade, Wolfe, Amherst, Bouquet and others, not entirely suffocated, was released, by the able administration of the Duke of York, from a position which would have ultimately succeeded in throttling it.

In the navy, Collingwood, "who was charged with the training of all the most dangerous seamen at

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<sup>2</sup> In 1795, the Duke of York "took over a number of undisciplined and disorganised regiments, and for the most part with the worst stamp of man and officer, and that in less than seven years he converted these unpromising elements into an army." *Ibid*, Vol. IV., p. 929.

This remark is reminiscent of a saying of Confucius:

The Master said: "To lead an uninstructed people to war is to throw them away."

The Master said: "Let a good man teach the people seven years, and they may then likewise be employed in war."

"The Chinese Classics," Vol. I., p. 207. James Legge.



a most dangerous time . . . accomplished it practically without the use of the lash—a marvellous achievement which is partially explained by the fact that under his rules of discipline, officers were obliged to address the men with civility.”

Charles Stuart and Abercromby were the soldiers who approached him most closely. St. Vincent, Nelson, Collingwood, “all alike were nearly as proud of an empty sick-bay as of a victory.” In the army, Charles Grey, Ralph Abercromby, Charles Stuart, John Moore and Thomas Maitland “. . . possessed that peculiar thoughtfulness for the soldiers’ comfort, which loses no opportunity of staving off from him avoidable hardship and privation. . . .

“ . . . Hitherto soldiers in the field had been treated in the War Office as mere cyphers. After an action a return of killed and wounded was indeed sent in, but it contained only the number, not the names of the fallen. In 1799, however, four Colonels who had ventured to furnish so bald a statement were sharply rebuked by the Commander-in-Chief for their neglect, and the names of the dead were required of them, for the sake of the widows and orphans.”<sup>1</sup>

On June 9, 1801, the Duke of York was appointed Commander-in-Chief in Great Britain and Ireland, and from this date he assumed absolute control of the

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<sup>1</sup> “History of the British Army,” Vol. IV., p. 927. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.



military side of the War Office. The result was electrical—a steady current of reform at once set in, revitalising an army dead to discipline, efficiency, confidence and honour.

## CHAPTER XIII

## The Tactical Demand for Light Infantry

## THE FRENCH TIRAILLEURS

IN 1792, the Austrians, by declaring war on France and invading French territory, commenced the wars of the Revolution. In 1793, the French Republic was threatened along its entire frontier, and the following year, 1794, the Duke of York and some twenty thousand British soldiers joined the Dutch in Flanders. The campaign began by the siege of Landrecies. "York's troops were on the march near Tournay (May 18th), when they were attacked in front and on both flanks, and were driven back in disorder on Tournay with a loss of sixty guns. The honours of the day again fell to the French skirmishers—'as sharp-sighted as ferrets, and as active as squirrels,' according to Sir Robert Wilson. They poured through the gaps between the several bodies and enveloped them. In square or in column the French infantry could be broken by the British and Austrian cavalry (e.g., April 24th and 26th, and

May 10th), but in swarms they were formidable and could sting intolerably. As the Duke of York's aide-de-camp wrote: "No mobbed fox was ever more put to it to make his escape than we were, being at times nearly surrounded."<sup>1</sup>

At about the same time a Prussian officer wrote to a similar effect. "In the woods, where the soldier breaks rank and has no drill movements to carry out, but only to fire under cover of the trees, they are not only equal but superior to us; our men, accustomed to fight shoulder to shoulder in the open field, found it difficult to adopt that seeming disorder which was yet necessary if they were not to be targets for the enemy."

The tactics of the French Revolutionary Armies had taken form, and the skirmishers, as proposed by

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<sup>1</sup> "A Review of The History of Infantry," pp. 197-8. Colonel E. M. Lloyd.

Even as late as the battle of Albuhera, 1811, a battle remarkable on the British side for the magnificent courage of the men and the want of tactical knowledge on the part of their leader, the French light infantry played havoc with the British line. "... Their sharpshooters at the same time, posted in the intervals between the regiments, kept at their murderous work, and even in the thickest of the fight managed to pick off almost all our field-officers on the ground. There was no cover; the ground was a surface smooth as a billiard-table, and the Frenchmen crept forward, stretching along the earth like some deadly reptile, until they reached the very edge of the gully, to fire from there, each sharpshooter using his cap as a rest for his fusil." "The Soldiers Whom Wellington Led," p. 166. Edward Fraser. It will also be remembered that at this battle two most important despatches were never delivered on account of the officers who carried them being killed by the French tirailleurs.

Turpin, Mesnil-Durand and Guibert, years before, were now to teach the English the same old lesson taught them by the French and the Redskins in the days of Braddock, and by the Americans only twelve to thirteen years before. It seems incredible that, in this short time, the lessons of seven years' strenuous irregular fighting had been so entirely forgotten, that the hastily-raised and untrained light infantry of France was able to hunt a considerable British force out of the Netherlands as a fox is driven from its covert by a pack of hounds.

The inglorious campaign in Flanders and the threatening invasion caused all but a panic at home; to allay which the government raised battalion after battalion of impressed rascals, and resuscitated regiments which had long been dead. Further, a series of ill-trained light corps were created to fill a gap in British tactics which had all but caused the ruin of the army during the campaigns of 1793-94.

To the creation of these hastily-raised light infantry units may be dated the rebirth of light infantry tactics in the British Army. The campaigns in Holland and the West Indies demanded light infantry and a new discipline; and each following campaign, in Corsica, Ireland, South America and Egypt, confirmed the crying need of this demand. The old order of battle, as adopted by European armies, was breaking down, in spite of all the opposition raised to maintain it. The infantry, formed in a three-deep line, had lost

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all activity "which is the soul of military manœuvre." The heavy infantry of Prussia and Austria could no longer command victory for the simple reason that their opponents were not similarly trained and were not employing similar tactics to their own. Slowly it was being rediscovered that the army which moves, and marches, with the greater rapidity, must, from very force of circumstance, prevail. It was rapidity which had won for Frederick, Leuthen and Rossbach, which was now going to win for Napoleon, Austerlitz and Jena—tactically as well as strategically, mentally as well as bodily, movement is the soul of war.

#### BRITISH MERCENARIES

To make up for a deficiency in troops generally, and light troops in particular, the British Government raised thirty-four thousand Hanoverians and Hessians; "to these were added five foreign corps, which were intended to supplement the dearth of light troops from which the British contingent had suffered so much during the campaign of 1793. As early as May of that year, one, Captain George Ramsay, had offered to raise a small body of foreign riflemen, and had, after some delay, been permitted to enlist also a corps of Uhlans. Thus originated three corps which, in honour of the Commander in Flanders, were called by the name of York Chasseurs, York Rangers and York Hussars. The formation of the remaining two,



the Prince of Salm's Hussars and Hompesch's Hussars, was only authorised in February, 1794, and, consequently, they were not ready for service at the opening of the campaign. No effort had been made to provide British soldiers for the work of light infantry, except by raising eight additional light companies for the Brigade of Guards, the men of which were distinguished by round hats with large green feathers, trousers instead of breeches and gaiters, and fusils instead of muskets. But with these details of dress their qualifications as light troops were exhausted, for they received no sufficient instruction in their peculiar duty." <sup>1</sup>

This, as we have already seen, was generally the case during the eighteenth century, untrained light troops being formed at the commencement of each campaign, and then at its completion, when once they had become war-trained, they were as speedily as possible disbanded.

General Grey's light companies formed a brilliant exception to this rule of neglect. Sailing in December, 1793, with a certain number of battalions and the flank companies of others, he arrived at the Barbados in January the following year. Once there, he busied himself in collecting the light and grenadier companies of all the battalions in the Lesser Antilles—in all twenty-eight companies—and formed them into three battalions of Light Infantry and three of

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<sup>1</sup> History of the British Army," Vol. IV., p. 215. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

Grenadiers.<sup>1</sup> These new battalions he placed for training under the command of Brigadier-General Thomas Dundas with instructions to restore "the perfection of Light Infantry attained during the American War." "Thus was begun," writes Fortescue, "at Barbados the work which Moore was ten years later to perfect at Shorncliffe." The light companies of the 60th and 21st, as well as those of the 39th, 43rd, 46th, 58th, 64th and 65th, went to make up Grey's 3rd Light Infantry Battalion.

In the West Indies at this time not only do we find Grey's Light Infantry and the 60th Royal Americans, who still kept up their traditions as a light infantry force, but also black Rangers, such as those used by Colonel James Stuart, in 1795, before Soufrière, and Malcolm's Rangers in Grenada which, in 1796, became the 1st West India Regiment. Further, a medley of foreign light corps, mostly German, were raised in Europe, and were sent out to the West Indies where more than one of them perished to a man. Others, reduced in numbers to such an extent as to be unrecognisable as separate units, were usually swept into the 60th Royal Americans. Such Corps as these were the York Fusiliers, or

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<sup>1</sup> This practice of massing the light and grenadier companies into battalions, was a common one, and though made use of up to the time of the Peninsula War, was showing signs of dying out as early as the year 1800. As late as the battle of Barrosa, 1811, we find General Graham forming two battalions from the light companies of the various battalions under his command.

Colonel Hardy's Regiment,<sup>1</sup> the York Rangers,<sup>2</sup> Waldstein's Chasseurs,<sup>3</sup> York Chasseurs,<sup>4</sup> also Hompesch's Chasseurs and Lowenstein's Chasseurs.

From Hompesch's Chasseurs four companies of the 5th Battalion the 60th were formed in 1798, and a year later Lowenstein's Chasseurs were drafted to this Battalion to complete it.

It is almost impossible to trace the life of these mushroom units, for their death was generally as mysterious as their birth, which took place during the chaotic years of 1794 to 1798. Though many

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<sup>1</sup> "Hardy's Regiment. Army List of 1795, shows a regiment of Foot styled, 'York Fuzileers,' commanded by Colonel Thomas Carteret Hardy commissioned 26 September, 1794." Perished in St. Lucia in 1797, probably of yellow fever.

<sup>2</sup> Shown in an Army List of 1797, commanded by Colonel W. Ramsay, whose commission is dated January 26th, 1796, eventually drafted to the 2nd Battalion 60th.

<sup>3</sup> Drafted to the 4th Battalion 60th.

<sup>4</sup> "The York Chasseurs, dressed and equipped as riflemen, were raised for West Indian Service. The Regiment, which was originally composed of foreign emigrants, deserters or prisoners, with some few English in the ranks, had a bad name, but improved in material and discipline as time passed on, and when renamed the Royal York Rangers was an efficient and well-conducted corps. . . ."

"Extinct Regiments of the British Army." A. E. Sewell. "Journal of the R.U.S.I.," 1887. Above notes are taken from an article entitled, "Prehistoric Riflemen," by Colonel W. Verner in "The Rifle Brigade Chronicle," 1906.

According to Capt. C. T. Atkinson, the Royal York Rangers figured in the Army Lists from 1801 to 1803 as Fraser's or the Goree Corps. From 1804 to 1807 it appears under the name of Royal African Corps, and in December 1807, as the Royal York Rangers. "See The Foreign Element in the British Army, 1793-1815." "Journal, R.U.S.I.," 1914.

of these strange ephemeral battalions were both rifle-men and light infantry of a kind, it would hardly be of use here to attempt to trace their history, for, save for the fact that their existence shows us that the wars of the day demanded light infantry, even of the poorest quality, there is little to be learnt from their records save that indifferent troops are never worth the raising.

The names of some of these corps have already been mentioned ; others were : Hompesch's Fusiliers, 1796 ; Hompesch's Mounted Rifles, 1800 ; Choiseul's Hussars, 1795 ; <sup>1</sup> Lowenstein's Fusiliers, 1796 ; Lowenstein's Jägers, 1800 ; the Corsican Rangers, 1794 ; <sup>2</sup> the York Light Infantry, 1803. <sup>3</sup> There were all kinds of other riff-raff light corps raised or partially raised : French, German, Greek, Italian, Dutch, Swiss, Minorquin, Maltese and Albanian. <sup>4</sup>

" . . . In fact the system of competing with foreign crimps for the refuse of the recruits of the Continent was a blunder, and a very costly and ignoble blunder ; yet it was ~~was~~ a piece with Pitt's former policy of paying a retaining fee to the Landgrave of Hesse for the first claim of his mercenaries, instead of spending

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<sup>1</sup> Choiseul's Hussars, The York Fusiliers and the York Rangers served under Sir John Moore in Flanders in 1795.

<sup>2</sup> Placed under the command of Capt. Hudson Lowe. They proved very efficient light troops.

<sup>3</sup> Formed of French deserters, was shipped off to the West Indies where it could do little harm.

<sup>4</sup> For many of these corps, *see* lecture of Capt. C. T. Atkinson, already quoted.

the money upon the amelioration of the British Army. Never was ostensible economy so false, so short-sighted, so unworthy of a great statesman." <sup>1</sup>

Except for General Grey's trained light infantry of 1794 and the amalgamation of Hompesch's and Lowenstein's Chasseurs to form the 5th Battalion the Royal Americans, these sporadic light corps are of little interest. Two other corps must, however, be mentioned which cannot be classed with these foreign units; as they consisted of Englishmen. The first is the 90th Perthshire Volunteers, <sup>2</sup> which was raised, or re-raised, as a regiment of light infantry in 1794. The second, "A Militia Regiment, the North York, which was one of the first in this country to be armed with the rifle, one of its companies being so equipped in 1795." There is a rumour, writes Colonel Verner,

<sup>1</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. IV., p. 897. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

<sup>2</sup> The raising of the "Perthshire Volunteers" has a distinctly romantic story attached to it. Sir Thomas Graham, a Whig Member of Parliament, had taken his wife, the beautiful Mrs. Graham of Gainsborough's picture, to the South of France on account of her being consumptive. There she died in 1792. Sir Thomas on his return journey to England with her remains, was stopped by a drunken crowd of National Guards who accused him of attempting to smuggle arms to the aristocrats. To satisfy their brutal curiosity they broke open his wife's coffin. From that day forth, although he was now forty-four years old, it became the one duty of his life to shoot down Jacobins. On his return to Scotland he spent every penny he could find on raising the Perthshire Volunteers which became the 90th Foot, and is now the 2nd Battalion Scottish Rifles. Sir Thomas Graham eventually became General Graham, Lord Lynedoch, G.C.B., and is best remembered as the victor of the battle of Barrosa, 1811. The French paid dearly for their insult.

"that Colonel Coote Manningham . . . saw this company, and that he was so favourably impressed with it that he never ceased urging on our authorities to form a regiment of Riflemen in the Regular Army."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Rifle Brigade Chronicle, 1900," p. 43.

## CHAPTER XIV

## General Sir David Dundas

## THE BASIS OF THE NEW DRILL

I HAVE already mentioned that on the return of the British Army from America, the light infantry tactics, which, during the war, it had been forced to adopt, met with scant favour from those officers who had remained at home and whose imagination was not elastic enough to stretch itself beyond the vista of the geometric evolutions of a Horse Guards' parade. I have also mentioned that the severest critic of the two-deep line and the loose order of warfare was Colonel David Dundas, who was, in 1789, serving on the Headquarter Staff at Dublin.

Dundas had been trained in the old school ; he was a level-headed Scotsman ; but a man of small imagination. In 1785, he attended the last manœuvres held by Frederick the Great and was so struck by the shoulder-to-shoulder formations, the flexible columns, the deploying battalions, and the minute precision and accuracy of the whole Prussian



Army,<sup>1</sup> that in order to stimulate, or rather to resuscitate, ideas already growing old, he, three years later, in 1788, produced an elaborate work dealing with the Prussian drill. This work was entitled the "Principles of Military Movements Chiefly Applied to Infantry."

Dundas was not exactly a great man, but his influence on the British Army was, in spite of his incapability to grasp the principles of war, an exceedingly beneficial one, more so than that of many a greater man before his time and since. His one virtue was thoroughness, a virtue the times sadly lacked. He produced his celebrated work at a period when any work of a serious nature, however narrow might be the views contained in it, could not otherwise but act as a tonic to revive an appetite for things military in Great Britain, which had become utterly jaded by the military debauch of the last ten years. Most of the war trained soldiers had been either disbanded or had become utterly demoralised. The old rigid discipline had broken down, and the new well-jointed discipline, brought to life by the American War, was entirely dissipated by want of direction,

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<sup>1</sup> Cornwallis, fresh from America, was also present at these manœuvres, and it is interesting to compare the opinions of this war-trained soldier with those of Dundas, the peace theorist. Cornwallis writes :

" Their manœuvres were such as the worst General in England would be hooted at for practising—two long lines coming up within six yards of one another and firing until they had no ammunition left ; nothing could be more ridiculous."

"Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis," Vol. I., p. 212.

want of condensation and want of control. Dundas saw a mob of men in place of an army—a drunken, besotted set of ruffians in place of a well-drilled soldiery. No wonder then that he, not being able to see beyond the political horizon, was unable to appreciate the fact that this rabble had once been an army of capable soldiers. In his mind there was only one remedy in order to counteract this want of discipline which he considered was the result of the American War, and that was drill; and there can be no doubt that in the year 1789 he was perfectly right; drill alone could restore discipline to the army. He did not, however, see that once this discipline, based on drill, had differentiated the soldier from the civilian, a further discipline should be sought, namely, a discipline based on affection, intelligence and skill. He did not see that drill should be simple as well as severe, and that it should prepare the soldier for all types of war and not for any one patent system of tactics. Nevertheless, at this juncture, his “Principles” were a veritable godsend, for they gave officers and men alike something *definite* to learn.

It has often been asserted that prior to the appearance of “The Principles of Military Movements,” there was no fixed system of drill in the British Army. This assertion is only partially correct, for, as a matter of fact, various official drill-books had been in use since the earliest days of the Standing Army. Many of these still exist, such as those of 1690, 1728, 1739, 1758; but, from the time of the Seven Years’ War to the days of Dundas, official

works on drill seem to have been little used, perhaps because the drill of Frederick the Great was so firmly grounded that it was not considered necessary to publish a revised edition of the 1758 drill-book; perhaps also because, from 1758 on to 1775, the British Army saw no service in Europe. But, by 1783, there can be no doubt that the old drill had broken down, that it was not fully taught, and that, from that date on, there being no official manual based on the lessons of the American War, officers drilled, or more frequently neglected to drill, their units according to their own particular fancies. It was, therefore, quite time that some work should be published upon which the army, as a whole, might be trained, otherwise co-operation between units would soon become impossible through each unit learning a different variety of drill.

“THE PRINCIPLES OF MILITARY MOVEMENTS”

“The Principles of Military Movements” deserve consideration, for not only do they, in a way, resemble Guibert’s “Essay on Tactics,” but they mark a definite change in the history of the British Standing Army. In France, Guibert had been accused of decrying the use of light infantry as suggested by Mesnil-Durand, de Broglie and others; but what he really opposed was the raising of irregulars under the title of light infantry. Guibert was a tactician of great merit; Dundas was only a drill-master. Nevertheless, on glancing at the “Principles of

Military Movements," we find that Dundas' chief objection to light infantry lay in its irregular employment. He advocated light infantry battalions in place of improvised corps.

Basing his book on the "invaluable work of General von Saldern" and his own experiences gained at the Prussian manoeuvres of 1785, he states in his Preface that, at the date of his writing, there was no system in the British Army which regulated or connected "the joint exertions of battalions." Further, he writes, and with a certain amount of truth, that "the very small proportion of cavalry employed in the American wars has much tended to introduce the present loose and irregular system of our infantry."

Turning to light infantry he says :

"The importance also which the light infantry have acquired has more particularly tended to establish this practice (*i.e.*, loose order). During the late war, their service was conspicuous, and their gallantry and exertions have met with merited applause. But instead of being considered as an accessory to the battalion, they have become the principle feature of our army, and have almost put grenadiers out of fashion. The showy exercise, the airy dress, the independent modes which they have adopted, have caught the minds of young officers, and made them imagine that these ought to be general and exclusive. The battalions, constantly drained of their best men, have been taught to under-

value themselves, almost to forget that on their steadiness and efforts the decision of events depends, and that light infantry, Jägers, marksmen, riflemen, etc., etc., vanish before the solid movements of the line. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

In this we see much that is sound. The idea then prevalent of looking on the battalion as the recruiting ground of its light company was radically wrong; it did not tend to efficiency in the light company and most certainly not in the battalion. When war broke out, the more highly trained flank companies were usually brigaded and formed into separate light battalions, and the remaining companies which, in 1788, were little better than a rabble, were left to the battalion commander to do what he could with. Dundas's statement that the *decision* of the battle depends on the heavy infantry or grenadiers is essentially correct. His mistake was that whilst in his book he sets forth an elaborate, far too elaborate, system of infantry drill, he all but entirely neglects the training of light infantry which he nevertheless considered a necessary accessory to the battalion.

Further on, he points out that all European armies use light infantry, but that their light infantry form separate corps; that their skirmishers work in order and are always supported by a “firm reserve”; that their attacks are connected, and, that unless

<sup>1</sup> “Principles of Military Movements,” pp. 12, 13. Colonel David Dundas. 1788.

they are so, the light infantry scattered in front prevent the proper use of artillery. This undoubtedly was often the case, as is well exemplified during the later battles of Napoleon when he replaced the act of demoralisation as wrought by the skirmishers by an overwhelming fire from massed guns.

Dundas opposed the two-deep formation, and here he made a radical mistake ; for depth of formation depended then, as now, on fire effect, and the fire-effect of the three-deep line had again and again proved itself to be negligible.

The " Principles of Military Movements " were very well received in London. The Duke of York approved of them, and, in order to introduce a fixed system of drill, Dundas received a royal command to embody his " Principles " in a volume suitable as a text-book for the British forces in England, India and the Colonies. This he did, and on June 1st, 1792, was published the first edition of the " Rules and Regulations for the Formations, Field Exercise and Movements of His Majesty's Forces."

" There was, however, so much that was rigid, formal and unnecessary in Dundas's drill, that it gained for him the nickname of ' Old Pivot,' while he also made the fatal mistake of distributing the whole science of military evolution into eighteen manœuvres, which were a sad stumbling-block to slow-witted officers. ' General,' said Sir John Moore to him in 1804, ' that book of yours has done a great deal of good, and would be of great value if it were not for those damned eighteen manœuvres.' ' Why—ay,'



answered Dundas slowly in broad Scotch, 'block-heads don't understand.'"<sup>1</sup>

### "THE RULES AND REGULATIONS"

The first edition of "The Rules and Regulations" is well worth a brief survey, for on this work have been based the various drill-books published from that day to the present.

The book consists of 458 quarto pages. It is divided into four parts.

Part I. deals with the training of the recruits; first, without arms, and secondly, with arms.

Part II. with the platoon or company, the platoon falling in in three ranks.

Part III. with the battalion, and Part IV., entirely with the line.

In Part III., pages 332 to 341 deal with light infantry, in a very brief and elementary way. Open order was to be at two-feet interval. Files may extend from the right, left or centre. When the light company is not extended all firing is to be by single men (that is independent firing). When extended, the two men of the same file are never to be unloaded in advancing and retiring. All movements were to take place in quick time (108 paces to the minute). Light companies were never to run unless ordered; the intermixture of files . . . "can never

<sup>1</sup> "Narratives of Some Passages in the Great War with France, from 1799-1810," p. 46. By Lieut.-General Sir Henry Bunbury, K.C.B. 1854.



be allowed." Advantage of ground must be taken but light companies must never be dispersed. In situations of defence the men must cover themselves by means of "trees, walls, large stones." . . . "The arms of light infantry in general will be carried sloped, and with bayonets fixed." The light infantry company was to be divided into two divisions and posted in rear of the flanks of the battalion, so that, when ordered to cover the front, they could move outwards round the flanks.

All this is laid down on pages 332 to 336.

On page 338 we read that when light infantry companies are formed into a battalion they are to act like any ordinary battalion; and on page 339, that "a battalion of light infantry may occasionally be ordered to run . . . running must generally be in column." When acting in battalion, light infantry must be careful to co-operate with the line.

Such are the first official regulations on the movements of light infantry. They are, indeed, scanty, nevertheless they constitute a beginning, and as such they form a conspicuous landmark in the history of British light infantry.

## CHAPTER XV

## Major-General John Money

## THE NEED OF CHASSEURS IN THE BRITISH ARMY

SINCE the close of the American War of Independence, the question of raising a New Army based on the experiences of this war had exercised the minds of many thinking Englishmen, and none more so than that of Major-General John Money, who, as early as 1775, offered to raise a body of light infantry, persuaded, as he was, of their value, by having watched the Jägers in the woods of Westphalia during the latter part of the Seven Years' War. "I gave my proposition to Lord Barrington," he writes, "It was to have consisted of two troops of *Chasseurs à Cheval* and 600 Riflemen. It was not approved of, but a corps was raised by General Tarleton, in America, somewhat similar to it. . . ."

In 1781, when Sir Charles Hardy's fleet retired to Spithead, before the combined forces of the enemy and an invasion of this country was imminent, Money wrote an anonymous pamphlet <sup>1</sup> which was published

<sup>1</sup> The contents of this pamphlet are given on pp. 7 to 22 of his 1799 open letter to the Hon. William Windham. This was "Weathercock" Windham, the Secretary-of-War.

by Egerton, the army publishers, in which he stated that "our Cavalry was but the pageantry of the state, and not such as were required to act in an inclosed country. . . ." To remedy the matter, he proposed a dual training for the cavalry : first, that they should be trained to act in squadrons, that is as cavalry pure and simple ; secondly, to organise the cavalry so that they might be made "dismountable in short legions." Further, he proposed to add to them chasseurs and light artillery, for such additions he asserts "would give a small body of Cavalry a great advantage over a large."

In 1792, he wrote a history of the campaign of that year in which he compared the well-trained chasseurs of the continental powers to the ill-trained light infantry of the British Army, and none too favourably. A few years later, in 1798, he wrote a small work entitled, "Observations on the use of Chasseurs," and apparently, as this work was scouted by the authorities, in the following year he addressed to the Honorable William Windham an open letter entitled, "On a Partial Reorganisation of the British Army." This letter was published by Egerton in pamphlet form, and embodies, according to his own statement, most of the views expressed by him in 1781 and 1798. From this book all the following quotations have been taken.

General Money was an officer of considerable experience. By 1799 he had served for forty years in the British Army, having first seen active service during the Seven Years' War, and for the whole of

this time he had maintained that in an enclosed country such as Westphalia, Flanders, or Kent, light troops were an essential to success. His chief fault seems to have been his honest indignation at the thick-headedness of the military authorities. On page 37 he writes :

“ And what should prevent your being organised as I advise ? Why, Sir, old Jack-boot prejudices, which no argument, I fear, or example will remove. Before, Sir, the German War, there was not a single Light Dragoon in the British service ; now we have little else, and we have not a single regiment of Chasseurs in our Army, yet I have no doubt that in a few years you will see many.”

Money's words were prophetic. Four years later Sir John Moore formed his School at Shorncliffe ; six years later still the British Army was given the two-rank formation.

Money's arguments are irrefutable, being based on experience and history. He points out that chasseurs are to be met with in every service in Europe except the British. “ The Austrians have many Regiments of them,” he writes ; “ the Prussians have them attached in a certain proportion to each corps ; but the French, seeing the good effect of these Irregulars, have brought them more into the field than all the Combined Powers together ; and I will venture to say, that in a country similar to Kent, the army supported best by Irregulars, properly armed and clothed, will carry their point whatever it may be ” (p. 9).

That this defect in the British service was not due to British character, but to the opacity of the British generals and politicians, Money clearly emphasises. The mere fact of the British being a free people, Money asserts, is sufficient to constitute them, if well-trained, good chasseurs; but of all men, he considered, the Highlanders would make the best, "as they are a hardy, nimble, and an intelligent people" (p. 45). The conservatism of the nation, however, stood in his way and delayed this essential reform. The country at large did not even know what was meant by a chasseur. "What is a Chasseur?" they ask. "What is his duty? If they had been called Irregulars or Riflemen, the same question would have been asked" (p. 23). The bayonet was considered the national weapon, consequently what had been good enough for their fathers was good enough for them. But, as Money asserts, and very truly too, "powder and ball must decide the fate of the day," and then he sarcastically adds, "~~not~~ forgetting a little military skill" (p. 15).

As countries become enclosed, so, Money points out, light infantry become more and more necessary, and replace cavalry. As an example he shows how the country round Lisle (Lille) in the days of the Duke of Marlborough was open land, but that a hundred years of growth rendered it quite unsuitable to cavalry movements and to infantry in mass formation. He then points out that England is "infinitely more strongly inclosed than Flanders," and adds, "we have above 40,000 Cavalry in this country, and not a

single troop of them trained or properly armed to dismount" (p. 35). That even when dismounted the cavalryman cannot compete with the chasseur. He quotes in support a contemporary work entitled, "Instructions for Hussars and Cavalry," in which the author states: "that if you have in your front nothing but defiles and woods, Cavalry is absolutely useless; if there be a defile or wood which is absolutely necessary to pass through, you must make your Infantry come on, and order your Cavalry to remain in the open country" (p. 34).

Again he writes:

"I will put one or two questions to Military Men which I am persuaded they must answer in the affirmative. Is there between London and Harwich, or Ipswich, any ground on which three squadrons of horse can form, without being in reach of musketry from the hedgerows on their front and flanks? Of what use then, in God's name, is Cavalry, where they cannot form to charge, for if they cannot form they cannot charge. Will any Officer of Cavalry tell me he can enter a field of ten or twelve acres (few larger on either side the great road) when the opposite hedgerows are lined with Infantry? No matter whether Chasseurs or any other Infantry: he certainly could not, let his bravery be what it would, for his men, when fired upon, would run back to the gate they entered, faster than they came in.

"Much has been said of our national weapon, as it is called, the bayonet. Let us see what effect that would have on a similar occasion, if they had an enemy

to force, posted as I have described them. Before half your men are entered to form and charge, those who were not killed or wounded would either rush forward with fixed bayonets, or rush backwards; if the former, the field would soon be strewn with dead men—it would be another Bunker's Hill. What then is to be done, may be asked, since you will not allow that our Cavalry can act in such case, nor our Infantry charge with a prospect of success? Nothing, Sir, so plain; nothing so evident; meet them as you ought with men armed and trained, to dispute hedgerow after hedgerow; then whichever army has the best Chasseurs (supposing numbers equal) will prevail of course; those who have the most, will not fail of succeeding, judiciously disposed of" (pp. 38, 39).

Kent, he points out, forms an ideal fighting country for the irregular. "An army destined to make war in America should be composed one half of Irregulars, and in the county of Kent not less than one-fifth ought to be trained, armed, clothed and disciplined as Chasseurs . . ." (p. 17). And again: "I make no scruple of declaring that not less than 3,000 Chasseurs are wanted in Kent to meet troops of that description, which the enemy will undoubtedly bring over, if they come; and as many are wanted in Essex, which is equally as inclosed" (p. 18).

#### ENCLOSED COUNTRIES REQUIRE INDIVIDUAL TACTICS

To convince his readers, General Money corrobora-



rates and supports his theories by incidents drawn from history.

"To the American War," he writes, "I look with a heavy heart for examples of the great use of Irregulars; for what was the army that captured General Burgoyne's but an army of Irregulars? What other appellation can be given to Militia untrained? . . . At Saratoga the finest army in the world, as to numbers, laid down their arms, to what Mr. Rigby in the House of Commons called an 'undisciplined rabble': but they were all Woodsmen, that is, marksmen" (p. 16). Had the army of Burgoyne in it a thousand well-trained Chasseurs, so an old Colonel in one of General Burgoyne's regiments told General Money, "that army would not have been lost" (p. 23).

In America the French learnt the great use of Irregulars; "there they perceived the undisciplined peasantry holding in check the best-dressed regiments in the British service, when once they had possessed themselves of a wood; there they were confirmed in the report, that the raw peasants of the country on Bunker's Hill, killed and wounded, out of 2,000; no less than 1,054 British officers and soldiers" (p. 21).

The French were not slow to learn the lesson the American backwoodsmen set them. To illustrate this he quoted Baron de Pomps' "History of the Campaign of 1796," in which the theatre of war in Italy is described as follows:

“ . . . The valleys which separate the hills are covered with mulberry-trees and vines, planted in hedgerows, or in arbours, forming narrow covered ways, which must be forced one after the other by the soldier ; the roads are defiles, lined with walls, and are nevertheless the only places where the cavalry can act.’ And in what part of England is it, where an enemy is likely ever to be engaged, that will admit of Cavalry charging but on our turnpike-roads ? . . . The author proceeds : ‘ In the Italian Tyrol, a battalion can never march and attack in front ; as soon as it advances to the enemy, it must be scattered about as Tirailleurs ; then each man must act for himself, and consider himself alone as a small Army.’ I was much pleased in meeting with this book which I did last summer, after my publication on the use of Chasseurs, for this coincides perfectly with what I have written on the subject. And what follows is the same. ‘ He must advance with rapidity when he is supported, and retire in the same manner when he is not ; he must fire *à propos*, then put himself under cover ; he must call his companions when he has found a good pass. . . .’ What kind of war does the author mean ? Can there be a doubt upon it ? A war in an inclosed country, to be sure, where a battalion cannot march and attack in front where the inclosures are so small, as to be within musket shot of the hedgerow in his front ; where Cavalry cannot charge but on great roads, such as this country is. It is for this reason therefore, Sir, I contend (and shall, till *I am childish*) that we must be

reorganised to fight the enemy on equal terms. The author proceeds : ' All new methods have succeeded in war, from the Macedonian phalanx to the tactic of Frederic. The French <sup>1</sup> owe a great part of their successes to the new mode of fighting which they have adopted ; they precipitate themselves like a swarm of wasps on all the points they desire to force ; young Generals put themselves at their head, and share their dangers ' " (pp. 45-8).

Money further points out how our disasters in Flanders were solely due to the fact that we could not meet the French Chasseur : " . . . From the moment we commenced our sad retreat from Tournay, till we arrived near Breda, nothing was to be seen but the enemy's Irregular Troops ; this was owing to our having only small bodies of Irregulars to meet large ones, and to the countries being inclosed, which favoured their operations.

" To this cause, and no other, may be ascribed all our disasters in West Flanders, viz., a deficiency in Light Troops, and of that particular description called by the French *Chasseurs à pied*, and *Chasseurs à cheval* " (p. 19).

In another place he writes :

" What was termed in this country the advancing *en masse*, by the French, was nothing more than very large bodies of Irregulars, which covered the country,

<sup>1</sup> Money's criticism of the French temperament is interesting. " I know the French well," he writes. " I have seen them in action, and have commanded them. It is true they charge like tigers, when elated with a prospect of success ; but they run like sheep when they are beaten, or likely to be beaten " (p. 55).

in the front of their Armies, like an inundation. To their Irregulars, and to their Light Artillery, are the French indebted for most of the victories they gained " (p. 8).

#### GENERAL MONEY'S PROPOSED REFORMS

Money's proposed reforms are scattered throughout his work, but by collecting them in some form we arrive at the following :

First, an army must have good generals (p. 33). " A General who wishes to have the confidence of his men, which every General ought to desire, he should upon all occasions convince them that he will never wantonly throw away the life of a single soldier ; and he who cautiously takes them into fire, and prudently withdraws them out of it when he sees no more good is to be done, that General will soon have the confidence of his men " (p. 24).

Secondly, training men means instilling confidence. To men who have been treated with severity when in health and with little humanity when ill, he justly remarks: " How trifling must such men's concern be, whether an enterprise succeeds or fails ! " Quoting Baron de Poms, he continues : " ' He is left to all the horrors of his profession ; the idea of killing or being killed is constantly present to his mind, naked and unqualified ; it is never disguised by the enthusiasm of honour.' What are such soldiers fit for ? Why, Sir, to be fixtures only in garrisons, or like the forty-eight-pounders on the ramparts,

never to be removed from them. But in actions, Sir, where animation, *where the exercise of the faculties of the mind* are called for, he is useless" (p. 49).

Thirdly, to obtain confidence it is necessary to possess skill. The British soldiers in America "were sensible, they were not a match for the enemy's Riflemen in the woods." There, he asserts, it was a contest between "high-dressed corps and corps of skilful marksmen. Seldom were the American's Riflemen seen, the report of his gun you heard, but his ball was felt" (p. 26). "Men who feel themselves cyphers where there is danger, will not long continue in it." It is, therefore, necessary to cement all these ciphers together by mutual confidence (p. 32). Musketry must be systematically taught, and all chasseurs should be armed with a rifle.

Abroad, he writes, "the men are taught never to waste a shot, and whenever they do fire, it rarely happens but a man is killed or wounded; they are taught to conceal themselves as much as possible; to creep from bush to bush, and if pressed to run off, for retrograde motions are not deemed disgraceful to Chasseurs; in short, a true Irregular is, or ought to be, in every respect an Indian, except in *scalping*. A Light Infantryman fires where he sees smoke, and continues firing till he has wasted all his ammunition. This is nine times out of ten the case. All this proceeds from his not being trained as a marksman, for if he were, he never would think of venturing a shot but at some determined object. When a

Light Infantryman hears a ball pass him, which he has the good luck of having escaped, he turns directly to the quarter from which the shot appears to come and fires at random, instead of concealing himself, as a Rifleman would do, and looking for the man that fired at him. This proceeds solely from a want of confidence in his own skill ; and the same want of confidence may make him quit his post. A man who trusts not in the arms he fights with, or in his own skill, must feel himself half beat " (pp. 10, 11).

Fourthly, confidence in one's physical powers is as necessary as confidence in one's weapons. " I have seen Indians in fire," he writes, " and am persuaded that fifty of them would kill or take two hundred men of any high-dressed regiment in Europe who had fifty miles to march in a woody or an extremely inclosed country. To support this opinion I would refer my reader to the accounts given of General Braddock's surprise, and total defeat, June 9th, 1755. This shows that Chasseurs ought to be brought as near the Indian as possible, and have nothing to carry when action is expected but a powder-horn and a bag of loose balls ; they ought to be able to run twelve miles in two hours, which any well-made young athletic man could easily be brought to in a fortnight, for there is no better material in the world for Irregulars than in this island " (p. 22).

Fifthly, a *chasseur* or light infantryman must be suitably clothed and equipped ; on this subject General Money's remarks are eminently practical. They are as follows :

“ The consideration of this article has been stated as futile, and as not worthy of attention ; <sup>1</sup> a brave man will, it has been said, fight well in any coat. No doubt of it ; but the plain question is, whether your men, who are to be exposed to the enemy’s experienced marksmen, should be clothed in a colour so conspicuous as to render every movement you make obvious to an enemy ? Or whether any other colour would better tend to conceal your movements, and so save your men ? Surely every General Officer would be glad to conceal his movements from the enemy, and surely it is the duty, as well as it must be the inclination, of every General to save his men, and not expend them but in cases of absolute necessity. A sentry becomes, in a scarlet coat, a complete target to Riflemen. A grand guard, or any advanced post in scarlet, are easily distinguished, and their numbers clearly ascertained at a great distance, even if they are posted in a wood ; on the contrary, if they are clothed in green, or dark brown, they are not discernible, but at a very short distance. Patrols have received a fire from, and been very near sentries and corps in green, when they have imagined an enemy was not near them by many miles. Not only the scarlet coat, which is the clothing of our Light Infantry, but their white accoutrements, may be objected to for the same reason ; they ought to be black. Their arms should not be bright, nor any glittering ornaments, no plumes of feathers, should

<sup>1</sup> These observations were first published in 1798.



appear on men destined to be employed on the advanced posts of an Army, particularly in an inclosed country. The Austrians are in dark grey; the French mostly in green; the *Infanterie Légère* in grey or mixed colour. In Canada, during the American War, we had two companies of Woodsmen in dark brown, nearly the colour of the bark of trees, which in that country was decidedly the most eligible" (pp. 11, 12).

#### GENERAL MONEY'S PROPOSED REORGANISATION

At the end of his open letter he sets forth clearly under seven headings his proposals as to the reorganisation of the British Army.

"Firstly, that one half of the regiments of Light Dragoons in the British service be immediately formed into legions, the cavalry part of the legion to be Horse Chasseurs, that is dismountable Dragoons,<sup>1</sup> the eight troops of each regiment, which now consists of eighty men per troop, to be reduced to seventy-two per troop. The Cavalry of the legion will then be 580; these to be clothed, trained, and armed as Horse Chasseurs, with a short musket, such as the French use, called *mousqueton*, of half-inch bore, a perfect cylinder barrel, made expressly for carrying ball true.

"Secondly, that three companies be raised, or drafted from other regiments, each company to consist of 60 men; these, with the 60 that will

<sup>1</sup> i.e., Mounted Infantry.

remain of the Cavalry reduced in number, will make a small corps of 240 Chasseurs à foot, to act and co-operate with those mounted, as occasion may require.

“Thirdly, that to this legion be attached two pieces of Light Artillery, not of less calibre than a four-pounder, which is the size of the French battalion guns ; for it is of the greatest importance in an action in an open country (in which such corps are as well calculated to act as in an inclosed one) that you have with you, or at hand, artillery equal to that which you may suppose the enemy to have, and what may fairly be deemed open country, is where there is a space of one English mile between hedgerow and hedgerow, or inclosures of any kind, through which Cavalry cannot charge. When Light Troops meet in such a country, then it is that the guns which carry farthest, will give that party to which they belong the command of the intermediate ground ~~between~~ the two hostile corps, and that artillery which is superior will, if well managed, always force the other party to retire, and sometimes oblige them to abandon their guns. If you are superior, you have then an opportunity of not only forming your Cavalry on the open ground, but to bring infantry forward also, under the cover of your guns and protection of your Cavalry. Enough has already been said on this subject ; any Cavalry officer, when he has seen a little service, will soon know what use to make of his artillery and Chasseurs.

“Fourthly, that two Lieutenants of the legion

be sent to Woolwich for a few weeks to learn Field Engineering ; also, two non-commissioned officers of each troop and company, there to be taught the exercise of the guns, etc.

“ Fifthly, that all the Yeomanry Cavalry in England and Scotland be made dismountable, and be trained and clothed as Horse Chasseurs, or have either a rifle or musketoon given them ; they then may be brought into action in a manner to do essential service, should this country ever be fought for ; but as they now are, should such a day arrive, they will (I must repeat it) be found more an incumbrance than of use. Country gentlemen will excuse this remark on their present organisation ; they are not indeed now competent even to force a market town in possession of a mob armed with scythes and pitchforks, with the avenues leading to it blocked up with carts and waggons. A proposal is here offered for their being armed and clothed in such a manner as to be able to render their king and country as much service as their zeal and ardour may inspire.

“ Sixthly, that one-fifth of the Infantry of the line be immediately formed into regiments of Chasseurs, by drafting out of them every man not fit for service, and completing them from the Light Infantry of other regiments, and by giving leave for the Light Infantry of the Militia to enlist into these regiments, without filling up their vacancies by a fresh draft on their respective parishes. By doing this, Government will be enabled to send out a fifth of every detachment of Chasseurs when it is probable

they may come in contact with the enemy ; and to the West Indies a still larger proportion ought to be sent of troops of that description.

“ Seventhly, that half the Supplementary Militia, which is a quarter of the whole, be armed, clothed, and trained as Chasseurs. When all this is done, Sir, you need not fear an invasion, or meeting the enemy in any part of Europe ” (pp. 51-4).

All this was not done, as we may well suppose, but nevertheless the hour was approaching when men of character and common sense such as Baron de Rottenburg, Colonel Coote Manningham, the Hon. William Stewart, Lieut.-Colonel Kenneth Mackenzie and Sir John Moore were going to carry out practically, at least so far as infantry were concerned, the proposals of General Money, and who, having completed their work, showed that in no way had he overstated his case. On p. 54, Money finally says that if his propositions be adopted and the British Army reorganised and reformed in accordance with the principles of war, the Republic of France may be held in check, “ and I am sanguine enough to think, forced to retire back into their ancient limits.” The years 1809 to 1815 proved that Money was a true prophet—true because he based his forecast on history and common sense.

## CHAPTER XVI

**The 5th Battalion, the 60th Royal Americans**

BARON FRANCIS DE ROTTENBURG

FROM the year 1793 to the year 1798, as we have seen, light infantry units rose like bubbles to the surface of the British military cauldron to burst and disappear almost as soon as they were formed. The campaigns in France had shown the dire necessity of employing light troops to meet and hold back the Republican tirailleurs. Up to 1798, however, the British Government saw fit to rely on foreign Jägers rather than on raising a well-trained light infantry at home. In this year, affairs on the continent were reaching a climax; the successes of General Bonaparte during 1796-97, when he carried war all but to the gates of Vienna, had startled Europe into realising, if not the essential value of light troops, of their necessity to compete with the sharp shooters of France. This year, Cornwallis wrote to Arthur Wellesley: "The system of David Dundas and the total want of light infantry sit heavy on my mind."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Correspondence of Charles, 1st Marquis Cornwallis," Vol. II., p. 333.

At the same time we find General Viscount Howe, now an old man, once again bestirring himself ; for, in 1798, he formed a brigade on the Essex coast for instruction in light infantry drill.<sup>1</sup> This brigade consisted of a detachment of royal artillery, two troops of light horse, and two light companies. More important still than Howe's brigade, we find that, on January 12th of this year, a true battalion of light troops was raised, namely, the 5th Battalion the 60th Royal Americans, which was formed from the debris of several foreign light corps such as Hompesch's Hussars, Fusiliers and Mounted Rifles and Lowenstein's Fusiliers and Chasseurs.<sup>2</sup> The men were chiefly Germans, they were dressed and equipped like Jägers and armed with the rifle.<sup>3</sup> This new battalion was placed under the command of Colonel Baron Francis de Rottenburg,<sup>4</sup> an experienced Austrian light infantry officer, and was sent to the Isle of

<sup>1</sup> For General Howe's system of training, see "The Diary of the ~~Duke~~ Hon. William Windham, 1784-1810," p. 389, edited by Mrs. Henry Baring.

<sup>2</sup> Lowenstein's Chasseurs supplied the 5th Battalion the 60th with 500 men. This corps was raised by Prince Wertheim about 1793, and entered the British service in 1794. It was sent to the West Indies, 1795 ; was present at the reduction of St. Lucia and St. Vincent, and took part in the expedition against Porto Rico, 1796-7. Portions of this corps and Hompesch's served in Egypt and in Ireland in 1798.

<sup>3</sup> In 1794 a battalion of the 60th, apparently the first, was officially armed with the rifle. Bouquet had used rifles experimentally in 1758. In 1801 a rifle company was added to the 2nd Battalion the 60th.

<sup>4</sup> De Rottenburg's gazetting reads as follows : "Lieut.-Colonel Francis Baron de Rottenburg, from Hompesch's Light Infantry, to be a Lieut.-Colonel. Commission antedated. December 30th, 1797."

Wight to carry out its preliminary training. Later Walstein's "Foreign Light Infantry" was added to it.

There is a certain amount of difficulty in verifying de Rottenburg's early history. In the preface of the English translation of Colonel von Ewald's "Treatise upon the Duties of Light Troops," published in 1803, we find mention of a work "peculiar to riflemen" accredited to a Colonel Rothemburg, who is apparently the same as de Rottenburg. The work mentioned as his is evidently the "Regulations for the Exercise of Riflemen and Light Infantry," written originally, as the preface states, by a "German Officer of distinction" and translated into English by command of the Duke of York. The preface of this work is signed by William Fawcet, Adjutant-General. Many editions of this book were published between 1798 and 1830. These Regulations do not bear the author's name, but, in spite of this, there seems little doubt that Francis de Rottenburg wrote, or more probably compiled them from French, Austrian and German sources, for several of its sections closely resemble those found in "The Rules and Regulations" of General Dundas which were admittedly based on General von Saldern's work; further, other sections closely resemble the ideas set forth by Guibert and de Poms.

According to General Rigaud, de Rottenburg began his military services in the French Army, serving in the 77th Regiment of the line. At the outbreak of the French Revolution he left France and



joined, for a short time, the Neapolitan Army ; next he commanded a regiment of infantry and served throughout the wars between the Poles and Russians.

Further, General Rigaud writes : De Rottenburg instituted a perfect system of light drill, field exercise and evolutions of the army. " He used to say that he never flogged his men when in command of the 5th Battalion the 60th, but governed them in a patriarchal manner, more as a father would his children than as a commanding officer used to do in those days." <sup>1</sup>

The 5th Battalion the 60th was sent to Ireland in April, 1798, and served with Sir John Moore in Wicklow and Wexford. In 1799, it went to Surinam under command of de Rottenburg, in 1803, to Halifax, returning to England in 1805, whence it was sent to Cork in Ireland, in 1807.

Whilst in Ireland de Rottenburg was employed as a Brigadier-General at a camp formed on the Curragh, and later on at a camp at Ashford in Kent. ". . . He was the father of the light infantry of the British Army, and such fine regiments as the 68th, 71st and 85th . . . passed through his hands."

His skill as a light infantry instructor cannot be doubted when it is remembered how admirably his own unit—the 5th Battalion the 60th—conducted itself throughout the Peninsula War, winning no less than sixteen battle honours. The state of

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<sup>1</sup> " Celer et Audax. A Sketch of the Services of the 5th Battalion Sixtieth Regiment (Rifles) During the Twenty Years of their Existence," pp. 3-5. Major-General Gibbes Rigaud.

discipline of both officers and men in this battalion was of the highest order, and they one and all were typical members of the new school of war, the school which believed in intelligence in place of stolidity, in individuality in place of servility, and in initiative in place of rigid obedience. The Regimental Orders by Major Davy, who succeeded de Rottenburg in command of the battalion, issued on board the Malabar in Cork Harbour, June 27, 1808, just prior to the battalion sailing to the Peninsula, show better than any words of praise can how carefully officers and men were instructed and trained. The following are extracts from these orders:

"The true 'Rifleman' will never fire without being sure of his man. . . .

"Interest and humanity both require the maintenance of a strict discipline. . . .

"It is the duty of every officer carefully to provide for the wants of his men. . . .

"The officers should endeavour to learn the capacities and characters of their men that they may employ them to the best advantage; this may be easily done by conversing with them, and hearing their opinion and sentiments on different subjects."

Skill, discipline, humanity and comradeship were the foundations of Baron de Rottenburg's training, which training may be looked upon virtually as the commencement of that system of training which under Sir John Moore at Shorncliffe produced a body of troops unsurpassed in all history.

THE REGULATIONS FOR THE EXERCISE OF  
RIFLEMEN

Colonel de Rottenburg's book on the Exercise of Riflemen deserves our careful attention, for, with the exception of the few pages in General Dundas's "Rules and Regulations," it is the first official work, published in England, which exclusively deals with light infantry training. The work was well known to General Money, for we find it mentioned by him in his "A Partial Reorganisation of the British Army," published in 1799, in which he states that he considered it a waste of time to publish a treatise on Light Infantry and Riflemen, since in the month of August, 1798, one was published, "... said to be written in German. No matter whether it had its origin in German or English, the author must have seen a great deal of service, for he has given admirable instructions for the training and disciplining such corps. Whenever Government may think proper to form them, his observations on an advanced guard, patrols, rear-guards, and picquets, ought to be not only read, but most of them copied into the orderly books of our Infantry when going upon service; they ought to be read by every military man who has never seen actual service, nor will any officer lose by reading it."

Though short, Colonel de Rottenburg's work consists of a complete course of training. It is divided into two parts: Part I. dealing with the

Exercise of Light Infantry, and Part II. with the Service of Light Troops in the Field. <sup>1</sup> As was customary in those days, the employment of light infantry is dealt with almost exclusively from a defensive point of view, light troops being generally looked upon as the shield of the army and seldom as its sword. In this respect, Colonel von Ewald's work is superior to it, for he, from personal experiences gained on many battlefields and in many skirmishes, showed what enormous offensive value skilfully led light troops possess.

<sup>1</sup> For a full description of de Rottenburg's system, see "Sir John Moore's System of Training," Chapters XI, XII, XIII and Appendix II.

## CHAPTER XVII

**The Rifled Musket**

## THE NECESSITY FOR RAPID FIRE

THE raising of the 5th Battalion the 60th virtually introduced a new arm into the British Army. Hitherto there had been infantry of the line, grenadiers and light infantry. The infantry of the line, formed, as it were, the recruiting districts of the flank companies, that is the light and the grenadier companies, sending its more agile men to the former, and its better drilled, for close order fighting, to the latter. The firelock of the light infantry, usually called a fusil, was of a lighter make than that used by the infantry of the line, but its range was no greater. The introduction of riflemen now added a type of sharpshooter to the light infantry itself, for the rifle with which they were armed did not permit of them acting as light infantry to the line.

In reviewing this question it must first be remembered that in the attack the object of light infantry is to demoralise the enemy's ranks by fire so that an assault with the *arme blanche* is rendered possible. To carry this out, rapidity of

fire, at close range, is a great deal more important than accuracy of fire at long, because it is necessary to approach as near to the enemy's position as possible so that the assaulting column may not have much above a hundred yards to charge over between the last burst of fire from its light infantry and the time it closes with the enemy in the hand-to-hand struggle.

Now, for the light infantry to advance as near as this to the enemy, meant that they must first approach to within a hundred yards of them ; secondly, it meant that superiority of fire must be gained at this range, in other words, that not only the marksmanship of the attacker, but rapidity of loading must be greater than the marksmanship and rapidity of loading of the enemy. Seldom has marksmanship alone been able to produce the necessarily demoralising effect. The rifle was certainly far more accurate than the firelock ; but, as the loading of it, especially after having fired from ten to twenty rounds, was both difficult and slow, it never, during the Napoleonic Wars, came into general use as a weapon suitable for light infantry. In place, picked men and a few picked companies and corps were armed with it, more for sharpshooting purposes than for preparing the way for the act of decision. In 1804, Robert Jackson rightly draws a distinct line between riflemen and light infantry, notwithstanding the fact that their training was the same. He says :

“ Rifle or marksmen form the first part of a

regiment. They are useful on various occasions, especially in sieges and for the attack and defence of advanced posts or picquets. . . . They are, or they may be, employed to feel the pulse of the enemy, to cover those who reconnoitre positions, to harass and annoy, and occasionally to impede, the progress of lines of columns in their advance to the scene of action. . . ."

"The Light Infantry presents a closer combat than the Riflemen. It occasionally meets the enemy with main force, though applied in a desultory and irregular manner. . . . The mode of action, among the light class of troops, appears to be irregular ; but it has its own rule of order. It advances, retreats, occupies positions rapidly, maintains them for a given time and given purpose. In short, it meets all the irregular presentations of the enemy, in so far that the Battalion which possesses the great mechanical power of war, is allowed to approach to its just point of attack without annoyance, and without the necessity of accelerating its movements—a cause which produces agitation in the frame of the individual, disturbs the steadiness of the hand, and necessarily diminishes the certainty of the direction of the missile force." <sup>1</sup>

Sir William Howe, it may be remembered, during the American War, took away the breechloading rifles from Ferguson's rifle corps, and rearmed it with the fusil. This probably was done more

<sup>1</sup> "A View of the Formation, Discipline and Economy of Armies," p. 267. Robert Jackson.



through prejudice to rifles generally than to Ferguson's rifle in particular, for from all accounts it appears to have been an admirable weapon. Ferguson himself stated that he could fire five aimed shots a minute with it, and, being a breechloader, the accumulation of fouling in the grooves did not interfere with the loading.

In 1793, the French light infantry were partially armed with the rifle, but, once Bonaparte gained control of the French Army, he had all rifles withdrawn, apparently on account of the length of time it took to load them. In 1808, Colonel Beaufoy in his "Scloppetaria" wrote: "A musket will fire three shots to one from a rifle, as generally used"; and this was a consideration of utmost importance when the fire fight took place at very close range, consequently speed in loading was of greater importance than either range or extreme accuracy of fire. We shall see that, in 1800, Cornwallis, when Viceroy of Ireland, held a similar opinion, namely, that the rifle, taking it all in all, was not so well adapted to light infantry as the firelock or fusil.

### THE RIFLE

The rifle was by no means a new invention, in fact, it is very nearly as old as the musket itself; for rifle barrels were invented somewhere between the years 1475 and 1525, their invention being attributed to various gunsmiths such as Gaspard

Kollner of Vienna, and Augustus Kotter of Nuremberg. Rifles were used for sporting purposes during the latter half of the sixteenth century, and were employed as a military weapon during the Thirty Years' War by the Elector of Bavaria and by Louis XIII. In 1680, according to Hans Busk, each troop of the British Household Cavalry was supplied with eight rifled carbines. The rifle barrel of this early period usually possessed seven grooves, which, on account of the crudeness of the powder, soon got so silted up with fouling that the greatest difficulty was experienced in loading. This slowness in loading during the War of the American Independence had been noted by a Colonel von Heeringen who commanded a Hessian regiment. He writes :

"The enemy had almost impenetrable thickets, lines of abattis, and redoubts in front of them. The riflemen were mostly spitted to the trees with bayonets. These frightful people deserve pity rather than fear. It always takes them a quarter of an hour to load, and meanwhile they feel our balls and bayonets" <sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, in spite of this slowness, its accuracy, when compared to that of the firelock, was undoubted, and often proved of the greatest value. At Bunker Hill it will be remembered the American riflemen picked off eighty officers out of the British force, which, all told, was only two thousand strong.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Hessians," p. 65. Edward J. Lowell.

## BENJAMIN ROBINS

In 1742, Benjamin Robins in his "New Principles of Gunnery" made a remarkable prophecy as to the eventual adoption of the rifle, which, however, did not take place until a hundred years after his day. He says :

" . . . Whatever State shall thoroughly comprehend the nature and advantage of rifled barrel pieces, and having facilitated and completed their construction, shall introduce into their armies their general use, with a dexterity in the management of them, will by this means acquire a superiority which will almost equal anything that has been done at any time by the particular excellence of any one kind of arms, and will perhaps fall but little short of the wonderful effect which histories relate to have been formerly produced by the first inventors of firearms."

Considering the primitive state in which firearms were in, in 1742, Robins must have been a man of extraordinary foresight, for not only did he predict that the rifle would become the future weapon for infantry, but also that it would be developed into a breechloading weapon.

In his day there were two methods of loading the rifle : By using a bullet slightly larger than the bore and forcing it down the rifle by aid of a ramrod and mallet. By ramming a greased patch upon which the bullet was placed down the barrel ; the greased patch keeping back the gases which slightly

compressed the bullet into the grooves and so caused it to rotate as it left the muzzle.

"As both these methods of charging at the mouth take up a good deal of time," writes Robins, "rifled barrels, which have been made in England . . . are contrived to be charged at the breech . . . and the powder and bullet are put in through the side of the barrel by an opening which, when the piece is loaded, is filled up with a screw<sup>1</sup> . . . And perhaps somewhat of this kind, though not in the manner now practised, would be of all others the most perfect method for the construction of these sorts of barrels. . . ."

As the great difficulty with a rifled barrel was to overcome the fouling, so the great difficulty with the early breechloader was to make the breech gas tight. This difficulty was so great that as late as 1858 we find Greener writing: "Striving to produce perfect breechloading cannon is like striving to square a circle."<sup>2</sup> We may well wonder what he would think of the modern quick-firing piece manufactured a little more than half a century after his day.

By the end of the eighteenth century a certain amount of progress had been made in the manufacture of rifles, weapons which had been used with such deadly effect during the American War.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Ferguson rifle was on this pattern.

<sup>2</sup> See "The Book of the Rifle," p. 64. Hon. T. F. Freemantle. Breechloading firearms were known in England as early as the reign of Henry VIII.

<sup>3</sup> "The English Military Library." No. XXIX., February, 1801. Vol. II.

In 1800, when it was proposed to raise an experimental rifle corps, a board was assembled at Woolwich on February 4th, and selected for it, from out of many foreign makes, one manufactured by Mr. Ezekiel Baker of London; this rifle was called the Baker rifle. Its weight was nine and a half pounds, its maximum rate of loading was one round per minute, its range three hundred yards, and twenty of its bullets went to the pound.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Rifle Brigade Chronicle, 1900," p. 44. Though in range this rifle seems to have been distinctly inferior to many the Americans used in 1775-81, its loading was, apparently, quicker.

The Baker rifle was not superseded until 1838 when it was replaced by the Brunswick rifle with a range of 300 yards; with this rifle a belted ball was used. In 1839, the needle-gun was invented, but not adopted by the Prussians until 1848. The Brunswick rifle was soon superseded by the Lancaster rifle with a range of 900 yards; the Lancaster, in 1850-51, by the Minié which was sighted to 1,000 yards. At about this time General Jacobs, of Jacobabad fame, invented a rifle which carried 2,000 yards. The Minié, in 1854-5, was replaced by the Enfield rifle. All these rifles, except the needle-gun, which had a low range, were muzzleloaders. In 1866, the French Army adopted the Chassepôt, and a year later the English the Snider, both breechloaders. In 1871, the Snider was replaced by the Martini-Henry, the last type of single-loading breechloader issued.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## The Experimental Rifle Corps

## THE FORMATION OF THE CORPS

THE birth of British light infantry dates from the year 1798, for, from this year on, we find a steadily increasing interest being taken in this arm, and the formation of the 5th Battalion the 60th, trained according to the admirable system of de Rottenburg, conspicuously marks the year 1798 as such. Just two years later, in January, 1800, the Duke of York authorised the formation of an Experimental Corps of Riflemen, and Sir John Moore<sup>1</sup> issued a circular to the commanding officers of 13 regiments—the 2nd of the 1st, 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, 29th, 49th, 69th, 71st, 72nd, 79th, 85th and 92nd—to furnish one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign, two sergeants, one corporal and thirty privates each, these to be brigaded for instruction in light infantry work, the whole corps to be formed as a unit under Colonel Coote Manningham, who had commanded several light companies under General Grey in the West

<sup>1</sup> Correctly speaking General Moore, for Moore was only made a K.B. in 1804.

Indies. Six of the above regiments took this excellent opportunity of getting rid of their worst men, one sending twenty-two unserviceable men out of the thirty asked for.

In March, 1800, the detachments assembled at Horsham and remained there until April 1st. Thence they marched to Windsor Forest,<sup>1</sup> to be trained under Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. William Stewart. The original idea was not to keep this corps together as a permanent unit, but to split it up and diffuse knowledge of the rifle throughout the army. This idea seems to have held good until 1803. At Stewart's request the corps was embarked for Ferrol in July, 1800. Some weeks later it was broken up at Malta.<sup>2</sup> This did not, however, destroy the existence of the Corps; for eleven days after the Corps had been ordered to assemble at Horsham, the Horse Guards called upon thirty-three of the Fencible Regiments in Ireland to supply twelve active young men each as volunteers, to the Rifle Corps; in all they supplied three hundred and ninety-six men.<sup>3</sup> These men were assembled under the original officers appointed to the Corps.

We learn from the "Rifle Brigade Chronicle" of 1893, that Cornwallis, who was Viceroy of Ireland in 1800, objected to supply these drafts, as he was

<sup>1</sup> General Maitrice mentions the place as Swanley. "Diary of Sir John Moore," Vol. II., p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> "History of the British Army," Vol. IV., p. 918. Hon. J. W. Fortescue.

<sup>3</sup> "History and Campaigns of the Rifle Brigade," Vol. I., p. 24. Col. Willoughby Verner.



"unwilling to weaken the Line by any such measure ; but that if he was overruled, fifteen or twenty men only should be taken from each Regiment, and that in the new Corps only 10 per cent should be armed with rifles." He supported his argument by quoting Colonel Wurmb, who commanded a corps of Hessian Jägers during the American War of Independence, and who had presumably requested Lord Howe to withdraw the rifles from the Hessian and substitute firelocks; possibly it was on Colonel Wurmb's suggestion that Howe also withdrew the rifles from Ferguson's rifle corps, not realising that they were of a superior pattern.

"Lord Cornwallis's<sup>1</sup> views, however, were not accepted," writes Colonel Verner, "and the Rifle Corps was raised in spite of him. In writing to Major-General Ross from Dublin, on October 24th, 1800, he complains that, 'we have given between 3,000 and 4,000 men from the Fencibles to the Line and to Colonel Manningham's Rifle Corps, which last is *a very amusing plaything!* Lord Cornwallis was no military amateur but an experienced soldier of many campaigns, and one who must have seen in America the power of the rifle in the hands of men who knew how to use it."<sup>2</sup>

In August the same year the camp was reformed

<sup>1</sup> "History and Campaigns of the Rifle Brigade," Vol. I., p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> This is hardly fair criticism. According to one authority, as we have seen, the American sharpshooters sometimes took a quarter of an hour to load their rifles; a skilful shot could only fire from the Baker rifle one round a minute against four to five which could in the same time be fired from the musket.

under Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. W. Stewart at Blatchington for the discipline and organisation of which the famous "Regulations of the Rifle Corps" were drawn up. On Christmas Day, 1800, Charles Napier joined this camp.

### THE REGULATIONS OF THE RIFLE CORPS

"The Regulations of the Rifle Corps," a standing model for all such regulations, were compiled, in all probability, by Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. W. Stewart, under the authorisation of Colonel Coote Manningham, Lieut.-Colonel Stewart founding his Regulations on the Company System. This means that each company formed, so to speak, a family under its Captain, the whole being cemented together by honour, comradeship, mutual confidence and affection. This system of discipline was, in 1800, practically unknown to the British Army. It is still, unfortunately, in some units not completely appreciated, yet it is the *one and only system* by which true soldiership can be gained. The company system is the backbone of the army, and when discipline in a battalion is seriously lacking, in nine cases out of ten it is because the company system, that is the individual care of the officers for their men, is not as good as it should be. "*Tel officier, telle troupe*," is the watchword of this organisation.

"The Regulations of the Rifle Corps" had such an important influence on the whole system of

economy established by Sir John Moore at Shorncliffe,<sup>1</sup> and Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. William Stewart played so conspicuous a part in the training carried out at that model camp, that I will now conclude this short introduction to "Sir John Moore's System of Training" with a brief account of the life and opinions of this remarkable man.

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<sup>1</sup> For a full account of these Regulations, see "Sir John Moore's System of Training," Chapters VII, VIII, IX, X and Appendix V.

## CHAPTER XIX

## Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. William Stewart

## CHARACTER OF LIEUT.-COLONEL STEWART

BORN in 1774, Lieut.-Colonel Stewart was only twenty-six years old when he compiled, or helped to compile, the "Regulations of the Rifle Corps." He was a man of a high intellectual order, of exceptional insight, but he was headstrong and of an excitable temper.

In 1790, he was attached to Sir Robert Keith's mission to Vienna and European Turkey. A year later he was given the command of an independent company. In 1793, he went to the West Indies with General Grey's forces and was Colonel of the 67th from 1795-98. Next, returning to England, he obtained leave to serve with the Austrian and Russian armies in Italy, Swabia and Switzerland, under such renowned leaders as the Archduke Charles, Suwarroff, and Korsakoff. In 1800, as we have seen, he and Colonel Coote Manningham raised the Experimental Rifle Corps.

Sir William Cope, in describing the share of Stewart in the formation of the Regiment, says:

"He now set himself vigorously to organise and discipline the corps thus formed at his suggestion. The Standing Orders of the Regiment, which, though issued of course in Manningham's name, were probably principally compiled by Stewart, testifying not only to his capability for organising and disciplining it, but in a most remarkable way to his pre-eminence above and beyond the military ideas of his time."

#### LIEUT.-COLONEL STEWART'S PROPOSED REFORMS

Through his writings we get an insight into the character of this able officer. In 1805, he published a work entitled "Outlines of a Plan for the General Reforms of the British Land Forces," in which the chief interest to us is that he bases his reforms almost entirely on *moral* factors and not on drill, the lash and the gibbet. Urging the discipline of mind as well as the discipline of the body, he writes :

"Subordination in an army is rendered most perfect when authority is softened by the feelings of honour and affection, but in order to attain a full degree of vigour, it must be incorporated with the better sentiments of the heart. It has invariably been the object of great commanders to mingle authority with levity, to inspire their troops with confidence in their own capacity, to call forth their enthusiasm, and to create a common feeling between the officer and the soldier . . . without sentiments of honour or feelings of affection, all regulations,

which relate to influence on the character, must ever be nugatory and useless : to these fundamental springs it seems, in fact, necessary that the whole contrivance should be adapted."

General Stewart, for by 1805 he had been promoted to the rank of Brigadier, condemned the volunteer system, which, in 1805, had reached its zenith. "There must be a total want of control," he writes, "and of that habit of mind, which progressively forms the soldier's character." Volunteering is but "to train men to a sort of mimicry of military evolutions . . ." and " . . . bravery without discipline, and without long preparation of the mind for the dreadful trade of war, will not avail . . ."

Similarly he writes of the militia: " . . . can moral qualities be created without previous cultivation, can that immovable front, that *aes triplex circa pectus*, so indispensable in the day of battle, be possessed without danger or hardships having ever been experienced? . . . effective and well disciplined forces are the best (they will ultimately be found to be the *cheapest* for every state), and that, without the agency of these, Great Britain can never be secure at home, command dominion abroad, and far less effect that revolution in the political world, which may restore Europe to any degree of *equilibrium*."

He wholeheartedly and fearlessly attacks the abuses of his day. He launches out against the perpetuity of service; the inadequacy of pensions

and rewards; the want of fixed headquarters in each regiment; the want of promotion in the lower ranks, and the inadequacy of the pay of officers and non-commissioned officers.

"The frequent infliction of corporal punishment in our armies," he writes, "tends strongly to debase the mind, and destroy the high spirit of the soldiery . . . it deprives discipline of the influence of honour, and destroys the subordination of the heart, which can alone add voluntary zeal to the cold obligations of duty."

With reference to the officers he says: "... their pay not having kept a proportion with the de ciation in the value of money, has become truly inadequate, the energies of their mind, in lieu of being directed to professional duties, are too frequently exerted, in these times, to the keeping themselves free from pecuniary embarrassment, it may be advisable to increase their pay at least 20 per cent."<sup>1</sup>

These, and many other reforms, General Stewart proposed, many of which, as the years rolled on, gradually percolated through the troglodytic skull of governmental officialism. Many of these reforms, unfortunately, are still waiting for some enlightened minister to materialise in spite of a people who, though never ready for a war, are ever eager for a fight.

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<sup>1</sup> Sir John Moore held similar views. As far as an infantry captain's pay is concerned, this reform took exactly 110 years to gestate!



## CHAPTER XX

## Retrospect and Conclusions

## THE PAST

BETWEEN the close of the fifth century and the opening of the fourteenth, infantry as known to the Greeks and the Romans all but ceased to exist, save in out-of-the-way corners of Europe and in mountainous regions, their place being taken by heavy cavalry. Tactics steadily declined until battles degenerated into hand-to-hand combats, and it was not until the advent of the British archer and the Swiss pikeman, that infantry reappeared as an effective arm on the battlefield.

What the bow began the arquebus continued, but this cumbersome weapon was not suited to light infantry work, and though attempts were made to use it in skirmishing, the invention of the plug bayonet forced the arquebusiers to remain heavy infantry.

Next we come to the invention of the flint-lock musket, or fusil, which is so superior to the arquebus that it rapidly replaces it. At first it is given to selected men called fusiliers, but these

seldom work as light infantry should, and soon the whole of the arquebusiers are merged into this new service. The socket bayonet is then introduced. This weapon enables a man to fire and to charge, and as the assault must be carried out by an unbroken line and as the range of the musket is short, the tactical result is linear fighting and the frontal attack.

Close formations demand a mechanical drill, this drill demands a rigid unthinking discipline. The individual soldier becomes a gun mounting; it is forgotten that he is a human being; all that is asked of him is obedience, until it is thought that if he can be trained to fear his officers more than the enemy, the general in command will possess a mechanical instrument whereby he will be able to impose his will on his enemy.

What is the result? War becomes brutalised, the human factor is disregarded, and under Frederick the Great the private soldier is looked upon as mere cannon-fodder.

The eighteenth century was a curious mixture of rationalism, idealism and superstition which culminated in the French Revolution, which, in spite of its chaos and atrocities, released a humanitarianism which changed the outlook of the civilised world. This was a social revolution, but meanwhile a military one, equally effective in its own sphere, was taking form. It was born in the backwoods of America, its sire and dam were the Redskin and the backwoodsman. These men were no regular soldiers,

merely partisans, guerillas, who armed with similar weapons to the redcoat, used them with intelligence and not unthinkingly.

These men introduced a new tactics or rather resuscitated an old, the tactics of the Roman Velites and the Grecian Psiloi. These tactics demanded intelligent individual and combined fighting. They could not be carried out by men driven forward by fear, or by men who were allowed neither thought nor initiative. They demanded personal courage, skill and common sense, they, in fact, demanded a new discipline.

Then came the American Rebellion and the French Revolutionary Wars. Humanity was unleashed, rules and regulations as well as traditions grey with age were cast to the winds. There was little or no discipline as we understand by this word; yet out of courage and determination and the tactics employed sprouted a new discipline as antagonistic to the old as were the Rights of Man to the Divine Rights of Kings. Without in England we were slow to recognise these changes—social and military. Yet they were vital; few saw them, and the few who did were ostracised, yet, as is always the case, the thoughts of the few ultimately vanquished the unthinking many, and so the new tactics are accepted, and their acceptance demands the new discipline, for without this discipline they are impossible.

In this small book I have traced this evolution from Frederick to Colonel William Stewart, or if

you will from brutality to humanity. I have ended this Introduction with the establishment of the Experimental Rifle Corps in the year 1800, because this unit forms, in the British Army, the stepping-stone between the old epoch and the new—the system of Frederick and the system of Moore. Colonel Stewart, who probably had more to do with the creation of the Rifle Corps than any other man, was one of several who had preached the new idea—the soldier is human and humanity triumphs over fear. What these men proposed Moore accomplished; thus it came about that the British Army was reborn in the Camp at Shorncliffe. Here a new tactics was given to it and a soul breathed into its body. It was this army which more than any other army, conquered Napoleon. It was for this army that the military prophets had been jeered at, obstructed and persecuted. The few had been right, the many had been wrong.

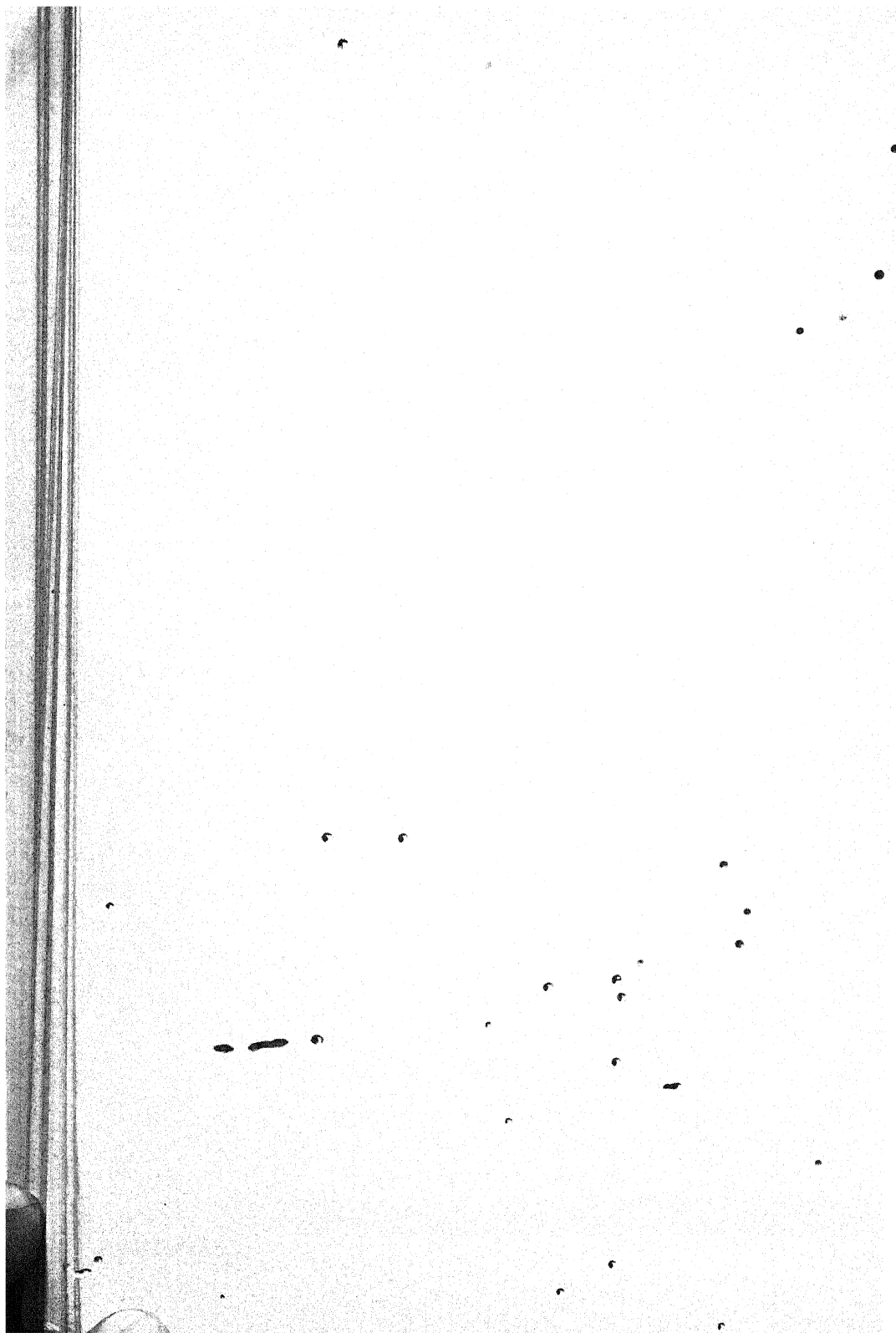
#### THE FUTURE

I will now turn to the present and look at the future, for unless history can teach us how to look at the future, the history of war is but a bloody romance.

~~To~~ day we are faced by a new tactics, a tactics of armoured machines. These new tactics will demand a new discipline, as highly intellectual as Moore's was highly moral and Frederick's highly brutal. This is not the place to describe what it should be,

but the fact remains that a change will take place, must take place, and the army which grasps this change first is the army which stands to win.

We may vaunt our old discipline of 1914; it was magnificent, but it was the discipline of the magazine rifle. One thing at least we know, and if we do not, then this book will have been read in vain, and this is that once men are armoured and fight in machines, and they did not do so in 1914, the discipline of 1914 will prove itself out of date and those who rigidly adhere to it will become a standing danger to their side. To-day the new tactics, as they emerge from the old, will demand a new discipline and this discipline must emerge from out the old discipline, just as the discipline of Moore crept out of the discipline of Frederick. Our first problem is to decide on our tactics, our second to develop our discipline to fit them. Without a new discipline our tactics will be in vain; this was the lesson light infantry taught the armies of the world during the eighteenth century, and this is the lesson which armoured infantry will again teach the world during the twentieth. Who of the many nations will learn this lesson first, and learn to apply it? Who first will be willing to listen to the prophets in place of casting them to the dogs?



## APPENDICES





## APPENDIX I

*The Manœuvres of General Howe as practised in 1774 at his light infantry camp at Salisbury. Extracted from Williamson's "Elements of Military Arrangement."*

## GENERAL HOWE'S MANŒUVRES FOR THE LIGHT INFANTRY

These manœuvres are principally calculated for a close or woody country. They are all done from the centre, and the two centre files of battalion, grand, and sub-divisions must be told off for the purpose. They are comprehended in the following table :

From the centre of	{ Battalion { Grand divisions { Sub-divisions	{ To the front. { To the rear. { To the right. { To the left.
The different formations are	{ To the front. { To the front and right. { To the front and left.	

Wings and platoons might be added in the table, and the same movements might take place from them ; but as the above will answer all the purposes that can be intended, to add any more will only serve to increase the trouble and confusion in the telling off.

These movements are nothing more than double Indian files from the centre of the battalion, or one file from the left of the right wing, and another from the right of the left wing. When the whole battalion has filed off, the right wing is in one file, and the left wing in the other.

NO. 1 BATTALION! FROM THE CENTRE TO THE  
FRONT—MARCH

The two centre files march out, and all the others face inward and march to the centre: as soon as they come on the ground on which the centre files stood, each file on the right of the centre turns to the right, and each file on the left of the centre to the left, and march out to the front abreast, covering the two centre files of battalion.

TO THE FRONT, FORM BATTALION

The two centre files stand fast; all the others run up in charging time, and form on the right and left of them, dressing by the centre.

NO. 2 BATTALION! FROM THE CENTRE, TO THE  
RIGHT—MARCH

The two centre files lead out, and wheel to the right: the other files follow the centre files as before, and wheel where they did.

TO THE FRONT, AND TO THE RIGHT, FORM BATTALION

The left centre file stands fast, and the whole left wing runs up by files, and forms on the left of it. The right centre file faces to the right, and the whole right wing runs up by files, and forms on the right of it.



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### NO. 5 SUB-DIVISIONS! FROM THE CENTRE TO THE RIGHT—MARCH

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The two centre files of each sub-division lead out, and wheel to the right, and each sub-division acts in the same manner as was described in No. 2 for the whole battalion.

#### FORM BATTALION

The two centre files of the right sub-division halt, and the other files run up and form to the right and left of them. All the other sub-divisions march obliquely to the left, and when the leading files are arrived upon their ground, the officers commanding sub-divisions order their respective divisions to form, and dress by the right.

### NO. 6 SUB-DIVISIONS! FROM THE CENTRE TO THE LEFT—MARCH

This is done in like manner with the above, when the battalion is to change its front to the left.

When a double front is to be formed, it is indifferent whether the movement be made from the centre of grand or sub-divisions, or from the centre of battalion. It should be remembered that when the battalion forms to the front and right, the left wing forms to the front, and the right wing to the right: if to the front and left, the right wing forms to the front, and the left wing to the left. That wing which is to form to the flank will be always the first formed, as the rear files of it will have the least ground to go over.

Thus we have taken a view of nearly all the manœuvres now practised by the regiments of infantry: the greater part of which, it must be confessed, are more curious than useful, more calculated to please the eye on a parade, than to answer any good purpose in action. Very few manœuvres will suffice for a battalion, if their utility upon service be the only object

considered, and those few judiciously chosen and well performed will do a regiment more credit, even on the parade, than twice the number here collected slatterned over in an imperfect manner. Yet numerous as the particular movements are, if we consider them attentively, we shall find that the general intentions are but few, and that practising a variety of manœuvres is nothing more than employing a number of different means in order to attain the same end. For the different kinds or species of manœuvres may be reduced to the following heads :

- (1) Moving in file.
- (2) Moving in column.
- (3) Changing front.
- (4) Changing order or disposition.
- (5) Forming square and oblong.

In treating of the manœuvres we have insisted the more, as they depend more on principles than any other part of the exercise : and further, as it is incumbent on every officer to study the theory before he attempts to enter upon the practice of them. The former may be acquired to a tolerable degree in the closet : the latter is to be acquired only in the field.

No rules have been laid down for the time or step with which the different movements are to be made : but none certainly should be done slower than with the common quick step : some, and particularly in forming, should be conducted in charging time. When a battalion, being already in motion, is to perform any manœuvre, the word March should not be given, unless when meant as an order to take up a quicker step. Thus, if a battalion marching forward in slow time is to retire in quick time from the right of sub-divisions, the word of command may be given.

#### SUB-DIVISIONS FROM THE RIGHT RETREAT BY FILES—MARCH

On which they march out to the rear with the quick step.  
Many of the manœuvres are useful only in particular

circumstances of ground and position. Therefore when regiments are taken out to exercise, it should not be confined, as is but too frequently the case, to plains and level country ; but the scene should be varied to every situation in which they may find themselves on real service. By this means they will learn the application as well as the practice of the manoeuvres, and will discern the occasions on which they may be found useful.



## APPENDIX II

## THE HESSIANS

THE Hessians earned very evil repute in America, whether they deserved it or not is hard to say; probably like most German soldiers they were addicted to pillage and drunkenness, nevertheless, they were brave and useful troops. The traditional fear of the Hessian name survived in America until as late as 1864. In an address of the Congress of the Southern States to the people made this year, we read: "The Administration (of Lincoln) has been able thus far, by its legion of Hessian mercenaries, to overawe the masses, to control the elections, and to establish an arbitrary despotism." After Trenton, Washington marched one thousand Hessian prisoners through the streets that the people might cease to think them invincible.

In "The Narrative of Lieut.-General Sir William Howe" in a Committee of the House of Commons on April 29th, 1779, published 1780, Sir William Howe greatly praised the Hessians. In his evidence Major-General Robertson stated: "... In regard to what the General mentions, of posting the Hessians on the left of the cantonments (at Trenton), I must say, I ever had, and still have, the highest opinion of those brave troops. The misfortune at Trenton was owing entirely to the imprudence and negligence of the Commanding Officer. On all other occasions, the troops ever had behaved, and, I dare say, ever will behave, with the greatest courage and intrepidity. The behaviour, on the attack of Fort Washington (afterwards named Fort Mifflin) of this very brigade of Colonel Rhall's, was the admiration of the whole army."

The early history of the Hessians as mercenaries is interesting. The following notes are taken from Walter Copland Perry's article, "On the Employment of Mercenaries in Ancient and Modern Times," in "The Nineteenth Century Review," of February 1907.

In 1587, Queen Elizabeth entered into correspondence with the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel to raise troops in his dominion; he, however, refused.

After the Thirty Years' War, the smaller German princelets grew in importance and began to ape Louis XIV. One of these petty despots had a body-guard of fifty men who wore high heels and had two bearskins among them which the sentinels at the Palace assumed in turns. Another regiment had three different uniforms for the same soldiers, so that at various times they might be Grenadiers, Cuirassiers or Jägers. Another prince had a squadron of Dragoons *on foot*, who at reviews were ordered to *neigh* to help the illusion. The traffic in the blood of subjects was begun on a large scale by the Landgrave Karl of Hesse-Cassel.

At Blenheim the Hessians fought well.

In 1731, Mr. Walpole moved for a grant of £230,923. 11s. 8d. for the maintenance of 12,000 Hessians. In 1777, Lord Chatham, then in the opposition, stated:

"We have swept every corner of Germany for men; we have searched the darkest wilds of America for the scalping-knife of the Indian. . . . Peace will never be gained as long as the German bayonet and the Indian tomahawk are threatened to be buried in the bowels of our American brethren."

Most of these troops were raised by Frederick VII. Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel who left behind him a hundred children. He provided for these after the manner of the Persian Kings, by raising the tax on salt on the birth of each son. Though extravagant and wasteful he left behind him 60,000,000 thalers. His son Wilhelm continued the traffic and eventually was overthrown by Napoleon. Wilhelm strove his utmost to rival his father in

the family propensity ; he failed, though not ignominiously, for he left ninety-four natural children behind him, twenty-two of whom were born to him by Fraulein von Schlotheim, "*alle ohne Liebe*," as the poor victim said.



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